

The Illustrated London News

Christmas Number



"WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD."

"Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew."

FROM THE DRAWING BY MISS C. G. TEMPLE. VERSES QUOTED FROM "POEMS OF CHILDHOOD," BY EUGENE FIELD.
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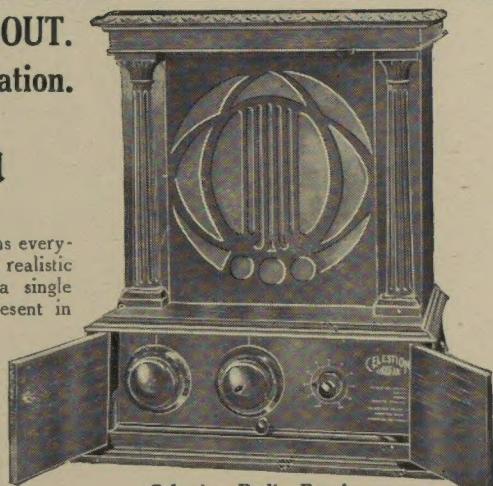
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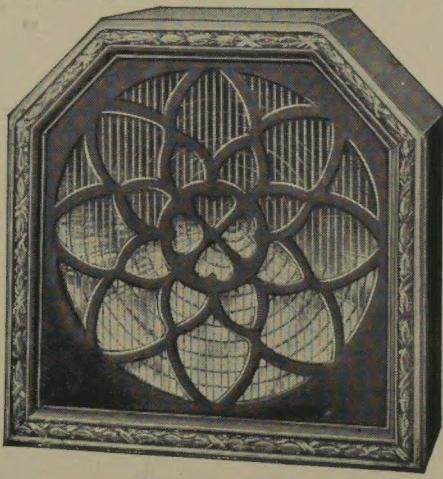
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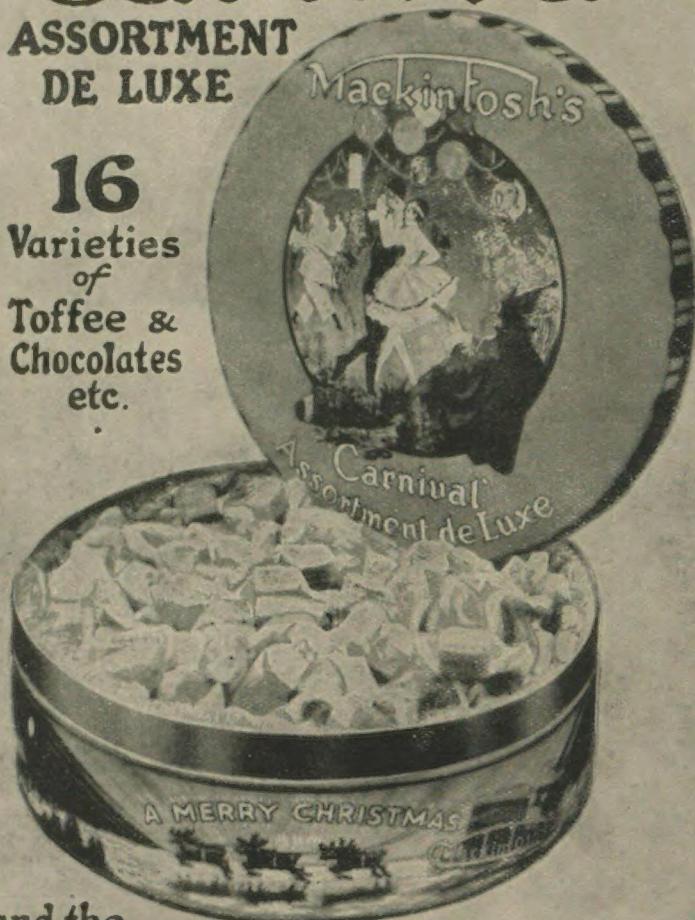
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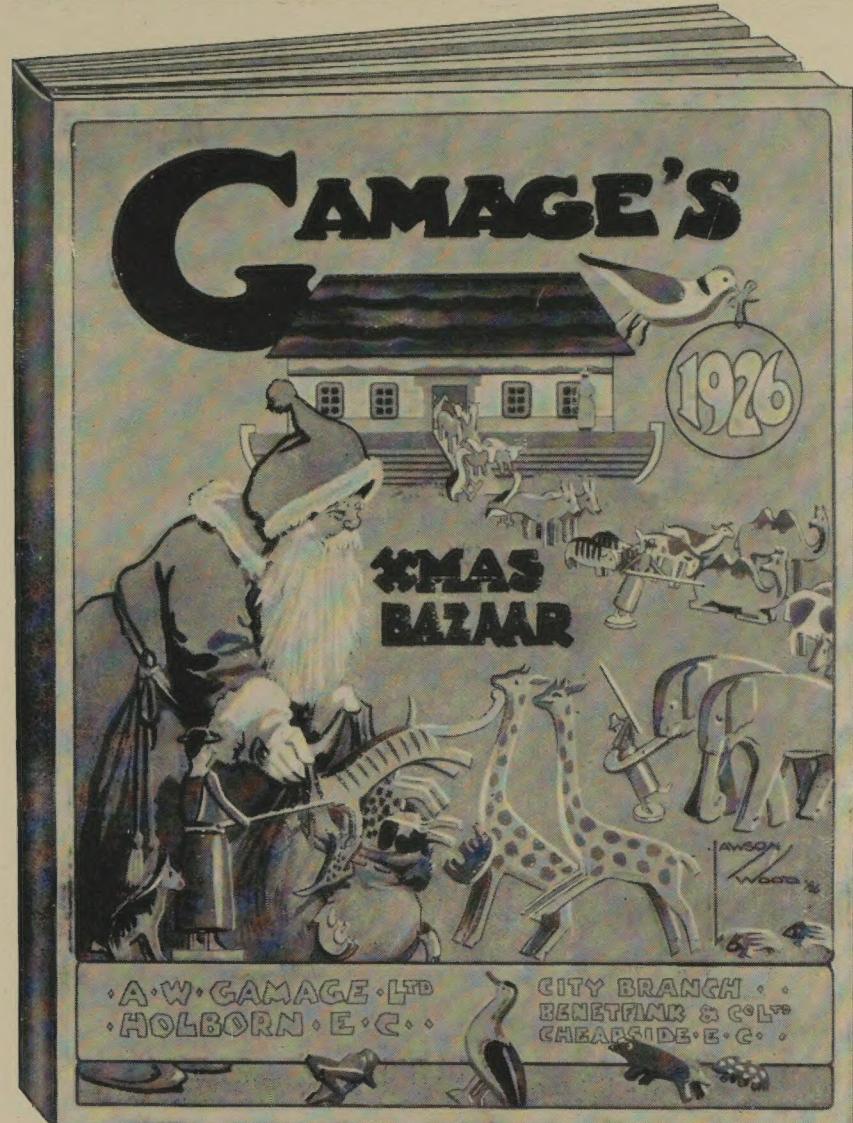
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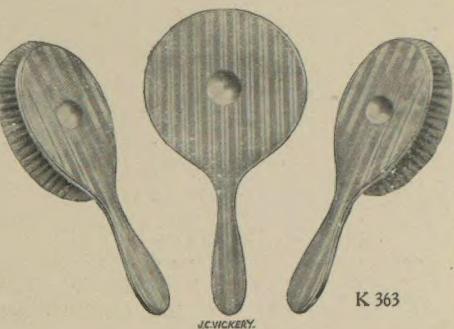
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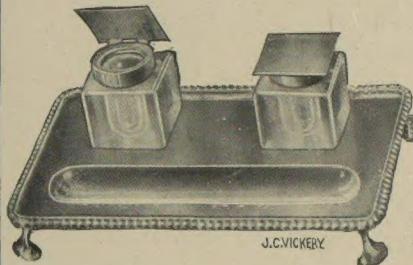
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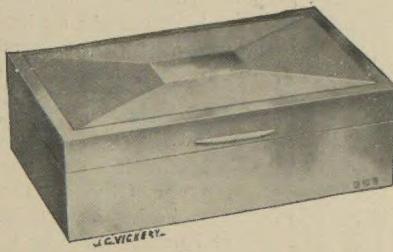
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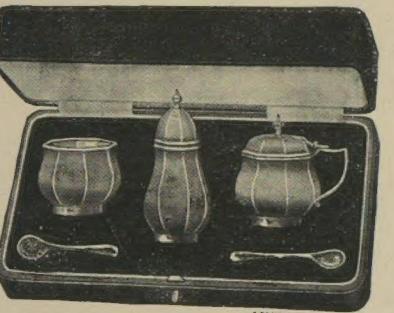
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The Illustrated London News Christmas Number

1926

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

COVER DESIGN. A Painting by GORDON NICOLL.
A Christmas episode of the days of white wigs and crinolines; the scene, Ludgate Hill, and the characters, a lover (with mistletoe) and his lady.

PRESENTATION PLATE.

A portrait of the Duchess of York with her baby, entitled, "Royal Motherhood." This picture was specially done for *The Illustrated London News* by John St. Helier Lander.

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD. A Drawing by MISS C. G. TEMPLE.

An illustration by Miss Temple of one of Eugene Field's well-known child-poems, published by John Lane in a volume entitled "Poems of Childhood," by Eugene Field.

WELCOME, GOOD PEOPLE, TO OUR CHRISTMAS FEAST! A Painting by E. WALLCOUSINS.

A picture of a mediæval banquet, with a title which symbolises the message we send our readers, in offering them this Christmas Number of *The Illustrated London News*.

RUSSIAN FAIRY TALES FOR CHRISTMAS. Two Pages in Colours by FELIX DE GRAY.

Mr. Felix de Gray has given us some illustrations to familiar fairy tales in previous Christmas Numbers. This year he has turned his attention to some lesser-known legends of Russia, which he has pictured in a most decorative manner.

SOME DANISH FAIRY TALES FOR CHRISTMASTIDE. Two Pages in Colours by FELIX DE GRAY.

Here Mr. de Gray gives us some illustrations to stories by the ever-popular Hans Andersen.

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CONTRAST TO ENGLAND. From Water-Colours by C. E. TURNER.

Two pictures which give a striking contrast of the South African and English Christmas—the larger one showing a happy party picnicking and bathing in the golden sunshine, and the smaller one an impression of the bleak and wintry weather of an English December.

DORMER BELLS. A Story by ELEANOR FARJEON. Illustrated by STEVEN SPURRIER.

"But so surely as bells fail to ring the people in to church, so surely shall all the souls of Dormer parish perish in fire everlasting." The story tells of how the Poor Parson of Dormer gave away the bells for the return of his son's soul, and in what strange manner the people of Dormer were saved.

THE CASTLE OF OUR DREAMS. A Drawing by S. H. SIME.

A characteristic drawing by that well-known imaginative artist, S. H. Sime, entitled "Chateaurien."

"AFTER ALL, I DON'T THINK I WILL." A Picture in Colours by M. WHEELER.

A mischievous little snowballer thinks twice before making a victim of the kind-looking old gentleman who is carrying a quantity of Christmas presents!

A CHRISTMAS FANTASY. A Full-Page in Two Colours by M. WHEELER.

A decorative drawing of a Pierrot in a wintry scene, carrying an armful of masks.

BROTHER FRANCIS PREACHES TO THE BIRDS. A Salon Picture by PAUL MARIE SIBRA.

This picture—"Frère François Prèche aux Oiseaux," by Paul Sibra—was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1926. Dorothy Margaret Stuart has written a little poem (printed beneath our reproduction) on the legend of St. Francis of Assisi, who, it is said, used to gather the birds and preach to them.

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE. Paintings by E. OSMOND.

This is a set of four paintings by E. Osmond, reproduced in colour, illustrating incidents from that famous old mediæval love story, "Aucassin and Nicolette."

A DAINTY ROGUE IN PORCELAIN. A Full-Page Colour-Plate from a Painting by ALBERT H. COLLINS, R.I.

This picture of a crinolined lady, by Albert H. Collins, R.I., was exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours, 1926.

THE PALM-TREE IN THE CRYSTAL. A Story by ROBERT RAMSEY GRANT. Illustrations by GEORGE BARBIER.

A love story of an eighteenth-century French marquise, who consulted the crystal of a sorceress. The well-known French artist, M. George Barbier, has illustrated the tale with beautiful colour plates.

ROBIN AND THE DRAGON. A Story by DOROTHY M. STUART. Illustrated by A. FORESTIER.

The poems and stories of Dorothy Margaret Stuart are well known to our readers. The story of "Robin and the Dragon" is an incident in the Wars of the Roses, and tells how little Robin, the baker's apprentice, helps a fugitive Yorkist knight to escape from his Lancastrian pursuers.

THE PAGEANT OF DISCOVERY. Four Pages in Colour-Photogravure. Paintings by GUSTAVE ALAUX.

M. Gustave Alaux here gives us, in colour-plates, some illustrations of great voyages of discovery. Three of them show famous incidents in the careers of those great navigators, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, and Captain Cook. The other one represents the traditional landing of the Norse Vikings in Greenland.

FRIVOLITY. A Drawing by GORDON NICOLL.

A picture of gay festivities of bygone days, accompanied by appropriate verses from the pen of William Jewell.

A LITTLE LEGEND OF EGYPT. A Reproduction in Colours of a Painting by ARTHUR H. BUCKLAND.

The legend is told in a little poem entitled, "The Scarab in the Pharaoh's Ring." Mr. Arthur H. Buckland's delightful picture of a "blue-winged elf" holding converse with a beetle was exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours, 1926.

THE ASS'S MOUTH. A Story by LAURENCE HOUSMAN. Illustrated in Colours by W. HEATH ROBINSON.

A story telling of the adventures of Simpleman and his ass, who were bewitched by a fairy. Mr. Heath Robinson's drawings form a colour border.

MAETERLINCK'S DOG : HIS STORY. Colour Drawings by CECIL ALDIN. Verses by JOE WALKER.

Here are six pictures in colours by Cecil Aldin, reproduced from "My Dog," by Maurice Maeterlinck. They depict incidents in the life of "Pelleas," a bull-dog, about whom Mr. Joe Walker has written some attractive verses.

A FAMOUS CHRISTMAS GIFT-BOOK HERO. A Painting by ANDRÉ DEVAMBEZ.

We are all familiar with the story of "Gulliver's Travels," and here is a realistic picture by André Devambez of Gulliver capturing the Blefuscus Fleet for the Emperor of Lilliput.

LONDON DEER AND THEIR CHRISTMAS DINNER. A Drawing by GILBERT HOLIDAY.

During snowy weather, the food for the deer in Bushey Park is sent out in a cart, and the deer of their own accord line up in single file, headed by the monarch of the herd, to receive their "rations."

THE YELLOW FROCK. A Story by ELISABETH KYLE. Illustrated.

A pathetic little story about an English girl studying music in Brussels who rejects love for the sake of ambition, and is balked of both.

A CHRISTMAS VISION. A Colour Reproduction from a Painting by MISS K. BLACKMORE.

This exquisite colour fantasy in a Maeterlinck vein, entitled "Cradle Time," by Miss K. Blackmore, was exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists, 1926.

REHEARSING A SHADOW SHOW FOR THE CHRISTMAS PARTY: THE WOLF FROM "RED RIDING HOOD." A Colour Reproduction from a Pastel by MISS CUMBRAE STEWART.

The fascinating pastime of "Shadow Play" is the subject of this pastel by Miss Cumbræ Stewart, which was exhibited at the Beaux Arts Gallery.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE. Four Portraits of English Childhood, by EDMOND BROCK.

These examples of child-portraiture by that well-known modern artist, Mr. Edmond Brock, were shown in his recent exhibition at the Alpine Club Gallery.

EVERY MORNING



FROM the sunny bathrooms of English homes, across the world to the far outposts of the Empire—wherever Englishmen have carried with them English customs and English institutions, the morning glass of ENO has been for over fifty years a golden rule of sensible and successful living.

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E. McKnight —

Kaufer '26



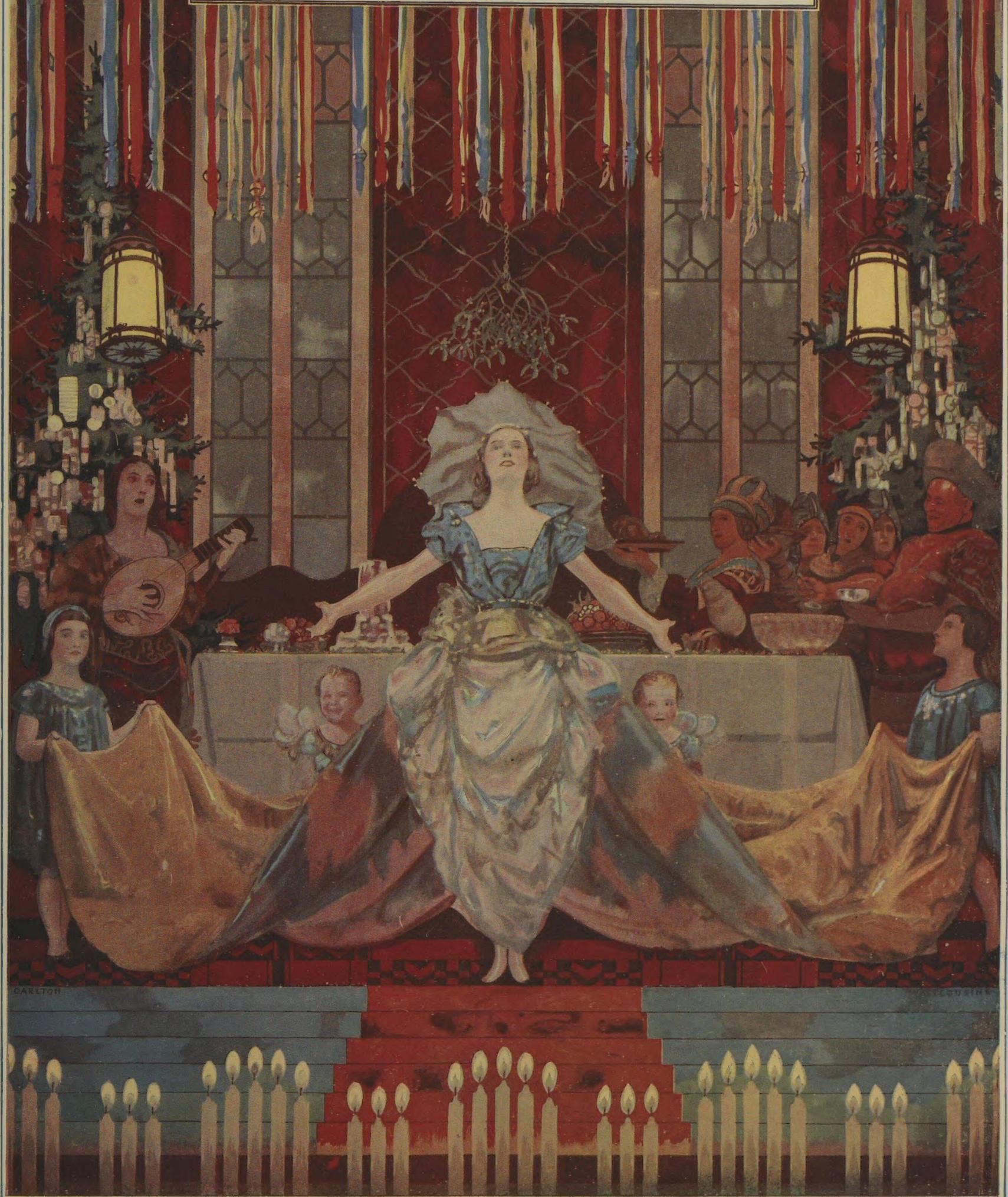
THE OXO HABIT



"THE MIGHTY ATOM"

"Here is the Beef, Mother!"

THE
ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS
CHRISTMAS NUMBER.



"WELCOME, GOOD PEOPLE, TO OUR CHRISTMAS FEAST!"

FROM THE PICTURE BY E. WALLCOUNSINS.

Russian Fairy Tales for Christmas.

The Lazy Old Man and the Raven.

A N old man having upset a sack of grain said: "If the Sun warmed me, if the Moon gave me light on the way, if the Raven helped me to pick up the grain, I would give my eldest daughter as wife to the Sun, to the Moon my second daughter, and to the Raven my youngest. His desire was fulfilled, and his three daughters were married as he had promised. One night when he visited his son-in-law the Raven, the latter made him come up a ladder and suggested that he should sleep warmly under his wings. The old man accepted and fell asleep, but the Raven opened his wings, whereupon the old man fell out and was straightway killed. So he gained no advantage by his selfishness and laziness.

The Prince Changed into a Goat.

A CERTAIN King and Queen were dead, and their children, Ivan and Alenoushka, left alone, set forth on their travels. Little Ivan being thirsty, and not heeding his sister's advice, drank from a magic well and was transformed into a goat. Alenoushka wept bitterly and continued her journey accompanied by her brother the goat. The King of the country through which they passed fell in love with the maiden and married her. One day Alenoushka fell ill. A witch came to cure her, but took the form of the young Queen and threw her, with a stone round her neck, to the bottom of the sea. With the aid of the goat the King discovered the trick. The real Queen was saved and the witch was burned alive.



FELIX DE GRAY

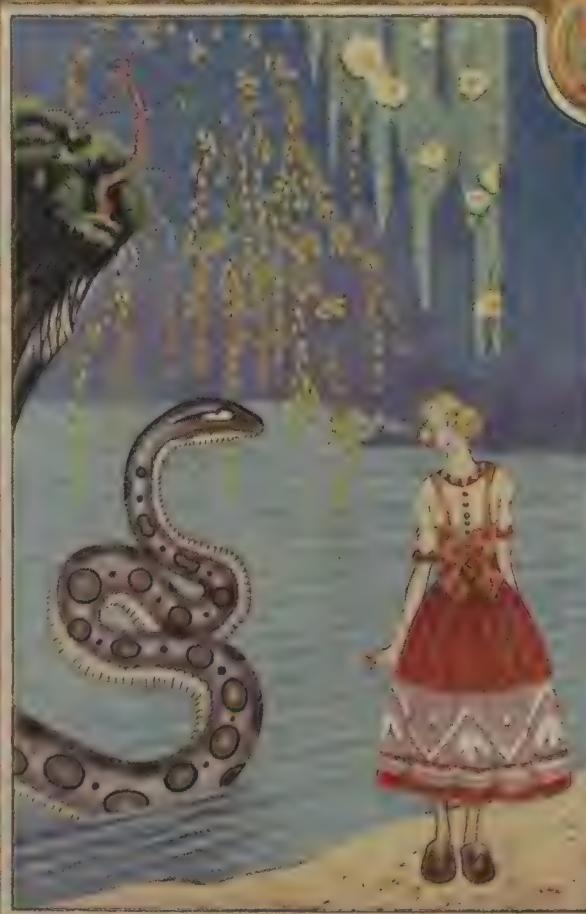
Russian Fairy Tales for Christmas.

The King
of the Waters.

A MAIDEN named Frosia was poor but very beautiful. One day while she was at the riverside with some rich companions, she said: "Alas! only a serpent would want my poverty." An enormous serpent came out of the river, and said: "Would you marry a serpent? I am the King of the Waters." Frosia consented. The serpent then changed into a magnificent Prince, and took her into the depths of his kingdom. She had two children, and she was happy, but after seven years she wanted to see her old home. The King let her go, making her swear not to reveal whose wife she was. But her little daughter babbled the story. Men came to the riverside, uttered a magic word, and killed the King of the Waters. Before his death he changed his wife into a cuckoo.

Ivan
Tzarevitch.

A YOUNG PRINCE, learning that his sister would become a terrible sorceress and one day devour his father and mother and his father's subjects, mounted his swiftest horse and took to flight. He sought shelter with "The Sister of the Sun." But the Prince was tormented by home-sickness, and asked permission to rejoin his parents. When he arrived at the palace his sister overwhelmed him with affection, but a mouse that knew the state of affairs said to him: "Fly! your sister is sharpening her teeth to devour you." Ivan Tzarevitch remounted his horse and fled, pursued by his terrible sister. He was on the point of being caught and devoured when he reached the palace of "The Sister of the Sun," and his steed leapt into it. So he dwelt at peace in the sun.



FELIX DE GRAY

Some Danish Fairy Tales for Christmastide.



Thumbelina and the Butterfly.

"A GRACEFUL little butterfly always fluttered round her, and at last alighted on the leaf. Thumbelina pleased him, and she was very glad of this, for now the toad could not reach them; and it was so beautiful where she was floating along—the sun shone upon the water, and the water glistened like the most splendid gold. She took her girdle and bound one end of it round the butterfly, holding the other end of the ribbon in her hand. The leaf now glided onward much faster, and Thumbelina, too, for she stood upon the leaf."

The Old House.

"THAT was a good house to look at; and in it lived an old man who wore a coat with great brass buttons, and a wig. The little boy heard his parents say, 'The old man opposite is very well off, but he is terribly lonely.' Next Sunday the little boy wrapped something in a piece of paper, and went with it to the house door. . . . An old attendant carried the tin soldier into the old house. Afterwards he was sent over to ask if the little boy would not like to come himself and pay a visit. . . . And then the little boy came to the room where the old man sat. 'Thank you for the tin soldier, my little friend,' said the old man, 'and thank you for coming over to me.'"



FELIX
DE
GRAY

Some Danish Fairy Tales for Christmastide.

The Shadow.

"THE sun . . . was really quite unbearable . . . The learned man from the cold regions became quite thin; even his shadow shrivelled up and became much smaller than it had been at home; the sun even took the shadow away, and it did not return till the evening when the sun went down. So soon as a light was brought into the room the shadow stretched itself quite up to the wall, farther even than the ceiling, so tall did it make itself; it was obliged to stretch to get strength again."

The Brave Tin Soldier.

"EACH soldier was exactly like the rest, but one had been cast last of all, and there had not been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two. And it was just this Soldier who became remarkable. . . . On the table was a neat castle of cardboard, with little trees round a little looking-glass to represent a pool. Waxen swans swam on it. A little lady, cut out in paper, stood at the door of the castle. She stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then she lifted one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg. 'That would be the wife for me,' thought he."



FELIX
• DE •
GRAY

Christmas in South Africa: A Contrast to England.

FROM WATER-COLOURS BY C. E. TURNER.



THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND THE ENGLISH CHRISTMAS: A CONTRAST OF SUNSHINE AND SNOW.

Christmas in South Africa is a time of golden sunshine, luscious fruit, and outdoor gaiety, a striking contrast to our northern winter. The South Africans keep up the old time Christmas customs and festivities, but at that season the glorious climate calls them to the open air, and they spend their Christmas holidays picnicking or camping out. Many flock to the coast of the "Southern Riviera," now so popular as a winter resort, and enjoy the delights of bathing. Above we see a typical South African Christmas party, and underneath it an impression of the weather usually associated with Christmas in England.

DORMER BELLS

BY

ELEANOR
FARJEON

DRAWINGS BY
STEVEN SPURRIER.

The Stranger then drew from his pocket a warm, full bottle of milk, and put the teat to the baby's lips.

THERE was once a Poor Parson in the village of Dormer. He was the poorest parson in England, and when you've said that you've said all. Still, out of his meagre tithes he managed to keep Alice his wife, Frank his ne'er-do-well of a son, Margery his pretty niece, and also his baby. To eke things out he had a garden and a cow; the one supplied him with potatoes and the other with milk, but at the time of this story the cow, whom they called Polly, was with calf by Joe, the biggest and most dangerous bull in the countryside, and the baby's milk had to be bought. The rest of them made do on skim milk when the farmer had more than his pigs required; and when he hadn't, they went without. It was Margery's task to look after Polly, and Frank's to see to the potatoes; but, as he preferred to sit joking in the bar of the Seven Sleepers, the potatoes were not so plentiful as they might have been.

Now, although the living of Dormer was the poorest in the kingdom, the church had the sweetest chime of bells in the country. It was hundreds of years old, and had a story attached to it. The people of Dormer had always been notable sluggards, who underworked and overslept on weekdays, and on Sundays couldn't be roused at all. Late one Saturday night the Bishop came riding through the village without notice. He put up at the Parson's, saying he would take the service next day. So he did, and not a soul but the Parson was there to hear him. The Bishop then inquired into things, and discovered, first, that the people of Dormer had the habit of interpreting the Day of Rest in its most literal sense; and, second, that this poorest of parishes had no bells in its church. He retired to meditate and pray for guidance; then, calling the Parson to him, observed that the Lord had communicated with him in a dream.

"I am bidden," said the Bishop, "to present you with a chime of bells, and so surely as bells ring in Dormer Church of a Sabbath, so surely will the sluggards of Dormer come to service. But so surely as bells fail to ring the people in, so surely shall all the souls of Dormer parish perish in fire everlasting. And this shall be a warning to the Parsons of Dormer

for ever, and handed down to them from generation to generation."

Soon afterwards the new chime of bells was hung in the Dormer belfry, and, because he was too poor to keep a bell-ringer, the Parson rang the people in himself. This became a custom with the Parsons of Dormer, who were all too poor to keep bell-ringers; and so it was at the opening of my story, on a Twenty-eighth of November, which was a Monday.

On this day a wealthy Stranger appeared in Dormer, engaged the best suite of rooms in the Seven Sleepers, and entertained with an open hand all who cared for such things as good food, good drink, and good tobacco. These were not a few—indeed, practically all the male half of Dormer flowed through the doors of the inn every day, and remained till it was time for bed, which they loved still better than eating or drinking or smoking. But he who came earliest and stayed latest was the Poor Parson's son; and, long after Dormer was snoring, Frank sat shuffling the Stranger's cards and rattling his dice.

Now on Saturday night, as the Poor Parson sat up late making notes for his sermon, his door was opened suddenly and Frank stumbled in. His father looked up quick enough to see that the lad's

face was as white as death, and his eyes full of fear, but he saw no more than that before his son flung himself at his feet, clasped his knees, and cried out to him to save him.

"Frank, Frank!" said the Poor Parson, smoothing the ne'er-do-well's hair with a gentle hand, "tell me what has happened, and I will save you if it be in my power."

The young man pulled himself together enough to stammer out his story. For five nights he had played with the Stranger for higher and higher stakes. By Friday night he had won a considerable sum, but the temptation to increase this to real riches was too great for him. The fever was now in his blood. "I saw a future," said he, "in which I could make amends to you for all my idleness, father. For, bad as I am, I have seen how my mother works, and how you go without, and how Margery longs for pretty things—and I never could make her a trifling present but once. But now I saw myself keeping you



Wherever they knocked or entered, the folk lay still abed; snores and grunts were all the answers their exhortations received.

and my mother in luxury, giving Margery as many trinkets as would make her happy, and providing our baby with all that surrounds the babies of kings. And of course," he added, hanging his head, "I saw myself well dressed, in a fine house, with horses in my stable, and friends to feast with me each night. And so when, to-night, the Stranger proposed higher stakes than ever, I agreed eagerly, and bit by bit lost all I had won; then bit by bit all I possessed—little enough, but, father, in my madness I staked my very shoes; then I staked what I did not possess, until I was so deep in debt that, if this poor house and all in it were sold a thousand times over, it would not clear my account. I saw ruin before us all, but it was too late. And then the Stranger proposed that—that—"

"Yes, Frank," said his father gently, "what did the Stranger propose?"

"Oh, father, he offered to acquit me of all my debts if on a single throw of the dice I would stake my soul. Once more I agreed, for I thought I had an even chance of winning, and in any case you would not be burdened with the results of my folly. We threw, and I lost."

The Poor Parson sat for a little like one stunned, but his hand never ceased stroking the young gambler's head. Presently he spoke. "Where is this Stranger, Frank?"

"Waiting below. He said he was inclined to see you before he claimed his—due."

"Bid him come in," said the Parson, "and then, my dear, leave us."

In a few minutes the Poor Parson found himself closeted alone with the Stranger, whom he now saw for the first time. The Stranger was dressed in a suit of fine black cloth, and wore across his chest the broad red ribbon of some order. As his eyes met those of the Parson he smiled shrewdly.

"I perceive," said he, "that you recognise me."

"Yes," said the Poor Parson.

"And fear me?"

"Not for myself," said the Poor Parson, "but I do, God help me, for my son."

"You will find," said the Stranger, "that one fear is the same as another fear. However, we will not waste words on a matter of theology, or, if you prefer, psychology. It is enough for you to know that, if I choose, your son is mine from this night forth. But I am prepared to waive my claim on him, for a price."

"What is your price?" asked the Poor Parson.

"The loan of the Church Bells," said the Stranger, "till the end of the year."

The Parson stared at him.

"It is not even a price, you see," said the Stranger easily; "a loan merely."

"What is behind this?" asked the Parson.

"A private difference between myself and one in authority," said the Stranger. "These things occur sometimes. You have read your Book of Job. In that case I was the loser. In the present instance I have undertaken to prevent the church-going of Dormer on a single Sunday during this December. I have engaged to exercise physical force on nobody, and to let nothing be done save by the free consent of the parties concerned. A little month is my limit. If I fail, I will trouble you no more. And I guarantee, in any case, to restore the chime at midnight on the thirty-first."

The Poor Parson saw the position at a glance. The legend of the bells had been handed on to him when he came into office. He knew the condition attached to them: "So surely as bells rang in Dormer Church, the sluggards would come to service. So surely as they came not, should they perish in fire everlasting."

He sat and wrestled with himself. It was hundreds of souls against one, but that one was his son's. Whenever he tried to think of the sluggards, his boy's white face and desperate eyes rose up before him, and his boy's voice cried out, "Save me!" Suggestions, not from heaven, floated through his brain; perhaps the legend was not true; perhaps the people of Dormer had changed; who could say that, after centuries of habit, they would not come to church, though no bells rang them in. "Save me, father!" cried the voice of his son. He turned to the Stranger and said hoarsely, "Take the bells!"

"And keep your son," said the Stranger pleasantly. "You are a good father."

"I am a bad priest," said the Parson.

"Tut!" said the Stranger. "Was it you who created your parish all sluggards?"

"I want no arguments," said the Poor Parson. "I know what I am doing. Come."

They went together to the belfry, and the thing was done as easily as unhooking a picture from the wall. Before they parted the Stranger said, "I must only require of you to lay

aside your duties as bell-ringer during this month, and not to beg, borrow, buy, or steal new bells for this church before the year is out."

The Poor Parson bowed his head and went home. Before retiring he sought his son and said, "The debt is cancelled." Frank caught his hand and kissed it. Then, in an agony of the spirit, the poor man went to his bed. All night he tossed and groaned, and his wife waked by his side, first begging and then scolding him to tell her what was troubling him so sorely. He had intended to bear his guilt alone, but by daybreak his strength was spent, and, weeping like a child, he buried his face in her shoulder and told her the whole tale. She listened with horror, mingled with relief—for was not her dear Frank saved?

"I should have done the same," she said. "I cannot blame you. But now let us see whether it is not all a bad dream—perhaps if we go to the church we shall find the bells hanging there as usual." For the Poor Parson's wife was a practical woman, and was obliged to be. Alas! one look into the belfry told them the terrible truth.

"Well, then, my love," cried Alice energetically, "you must not rest, but must run round to all the houses and rouse the folk yourself. And Frank shall go with you. And when I have given the baby its bottle, I will come after you."

For, whatever might betide, in that household the baby came first. She was soon at their heels, having left the child in Margery's charge. But on this unhappy Fourth of December it was to be borne in on the Poor Parson as never before what sort of a parish he had in his care. Wherever they knocked or entered, the folk lay still abed; snores and grunts were all the answers their exhortations received, even when they cried in the sluggards' ears that their souls were in peril.

Returning to their house, the Poor Parson's wife stamped her foot, crying, "They deserve all they get. Are you responsible for their sloth?"

"I am responsible for their salvation," groaned her husband. "I see now the old tale was true, and they must be rung to church or not at all." And he broke down utterly.

His grief roused all her wits in her. "Why, then," said she, "rung to church they shall be!" And she rushed into the house.

He raised his head with a gleam of hope, for he knew she was a woman not easily beaten. In another moment she had reappeared with something in each hand. "Husband," she cried, "bless the door-bell and the dinner-bell!"

And she held out to him the bell with which she was wont to summon him in from the potato-patch, and that which rang inside the door when callers came.

"But these," he stammered, "are no church bells!"

"And what of that?" said Alice. "They are good bells, and all the tale says is that so surely as bells are rung in Dormer Church of a Sabbath, so surely will the sluggards come to service. Bless them quickly, husband, and into your surplice with you."

It is placed on record in the Dormer chronicles that on the Fourth of December, 18—, the people were rung to church by the Poor Parson's dinner-bell. And a fine sight the Poor Parson's wife must have been, as she stood in the belfry flushed with triumph and indignation, swinging the door-bell with her right-hand, and the dinner-bell with her left, while the people shuffled into their places. At all events, that Sunday no souls were damned in Dormer.

"I should like to see your Stranger now!" laughed Alice, as her husband embraced her after the service.

But before the week was out, she had stopped laughing. For, by a series of the strangest accidents, she was entirely unable to procure milk for the baby. Wherever she went for it, the farmers had had all their milk commandeered at double prices by a great lord from London. The Poor Parson's wife grew more desperate daily, as the baby grew daily more fretful and feeble. She went from house to house, and from farm to farm, praying for a pint, for half a pint, for a bottleful. There was none to be had.

"Save me a drop to-morrow," she begged, and was promised; but on the morrow the London lord had sent a guinea for the half-pint just before she arrived, and the offer had been too tempting to be resisted. On the Saturday evening as she bathed the baby, its tiny body was as wet with her tears as with soap-suds.

"Oh, my pretty, my pretty!" sobbed Alice, clasping the precious thing to her and rocking to and fro, "don't die and break my heart!"

As she spoke, a shadow fell across her, and, "Fie, Madam, what sad talk is this of death and broken hearts?" said a bland voice in her ear. Looking up, she beheld a tall dark man standing beside her. He had entered so quietly that she had not heard him. She noticed vaguely that he was dressed in black, and

wore a red ribbon on his chest, but what rivetted her gaze was his right hand, from which hung a small milk-can, a white drop trickling from it.

"Who are you?" she said.

"The milkman, if you like," he smiled.

"Oh!" cried the Parson's wife, in eager joy, "give me the can!"

"Softly, softly," said the Stranger. "It is worth its price."

"I have no money, sir," said the Poor Parson's wife.

"And if you had," he rejoined, "money would hardly pay for such as this. To some it is a pint of milk, but you and I know it is a child's life."

"Yes, yes!" she said. "What do you want for it?"



The Poor Parson's wife . . . stood in the belfry flushed with triumph and indignation, swinging the door-bell with her right hand, and the dinner-bell with her left.

"Little enough, dear Madam. The dinner-bell and the house-bell, that is all."

She looked up sharply, and now for the first time met his smiling eyes, and started up in horror. But—

"Milk for the child," said he persuasively, and dangled the can before her. The Poor Parson's wife, who was not easily beaten, knew that she was now. "Wait!" she whispered. Cuddling the baby close she ran from the room, and soon returned with the two bells. She thrust them into the Stranger's hands and seized the can. "There!" she gasped. "Go!"

"When you have promised," said he, "to give up bell-ringing for the rest of the month, and neither to buy, beg, borrow, nor steal other bells to replace these."

"I promise," said Alice in a low voice. He bowed, and went; even before he left the room she was warming the milk in the baby's bottle.

But when the child was fed and sleeping, she fell a-sobbing more bitterly than before, and it was so that Margery her niece discovered her.

"Why, aunt, dear aunt," cried the girl, "whatever is amiss? Is our baby worse?"

"Nay, better!" sobbed the poor woman, "but, oh, at what a cost!" Between her sobs she told her niece the tale. "And how can I face your uncle, Margery? I have ruined all the souls in his keeping, I who thought to save them this whole month, and to save him, too, from bitter self-reproach."

All night she moaned and wept, and though her husband implored her to confide in him, she could not bring her courage to the point of doing so. In the morning he said to her, "My dear heart, whatever your grief, I pray you to put it from you for a little while, and perform again the blessed office which saved us all last week."

At this she fell on her knees before him, and confessed the truth. "It was for the child," she ended, hiding her swollen eyes against his sleeve. "I know," said the Poor Parson, sorrowfully.

As they stayed thus, quick footsteps ran down the passage, accompanied by the faintest of tinkling sounds. "Why, what is this?" said the Poor Parson. The door flew open, and in hurried Margery with her hands to her ears.

"Oh, aunt, you have told him, then!" she said. "I am so glad, because—oh, aunt, I have thought of something." She took her hands from her ears, and looked blushing from the Poor Parson to his wife; and they saw that on either side of her pretty face hung a tiny silver bell. "Uncle," she said shyly, "some while ago Frank gave me these, and I never dared to wear them, for I knew he ought not, when you were in such want; and yet—and yet I could not let them go, for they are the only ornaments I ever had. And, oh, I am not sorry now, if only they will save Dormer to-day. Dear uncle, bless my ear-rings, and I will go ring them in the belfry."

"But Margery," said the Poor Parson's wife, "not a soul will hear them!"

"I don't know," said Margery. "The legend only says that bells must be rung in Dormer Church."

"She is right," said the Poor Parson. "Kneel down, child."

She knelt, and he blessed her ear-rings.

Searchers among the Dormer archives will discover that on the Eleventh of December, 18—, the people of Dormer were rung to church by a pair of silver ear-rings. And a pretty sight it must have been to see the rosy-faced girl shaking her head under the bell-ropes, tinkling the sleepy-heads into their seats. Not a man or woman stayed away, and the Poor Parson knew that his parish was saved once more.

That evening Frank walked with Margery in the lane, and said to her, "Do you remember how you scolded me, Madge, the day I gave them to you?"

"No, I've forgotten—did I scold you?" said Margery.

"I know," said Frank, "you never thanked me for them."

(Continued on Page 14)

THE CASTLE OF OUR DREAMS.



"CHATEAURIEN."



"AFTER ALL, I DON'T THINK I WILL!"

"I can't remember—did I not thank you?"

"Thank me now, Madge," persisted Frank.

When he had been well thanked, Margery said, "I will always, always wear them, Frank." But she was to eat that "always" before the week's end.

For what had happened last week happened this. "No milk, no milk!" was the cry wherever they went. The mother wrung her hands; Frank vowed he would break the farmers' heads; Margery ran from door to door, pleading for milk—in vain. By Saturday the baby was ailing sadly; it could not thrive on water and potatoes.

Late on the Saturday night Margery came along the lane. She had gone out on a long fruitless quest, and was weary and faint-hearted. She had no heart to take home her empty jug, and at the gate, leaning against a tree, she stood and sighed.

"Poor girl, poor girl!" said a suave voice in her ear. "What, have you lost your lover?"

"Sir!" stammered Margery, looking up in alarm. Before her stood a lean dark figure, clad in black, with a scarlet decoration.

"Tell me your trouble," said the Stranger, "and, if I can comfort you, I will."

Margery drew away, saying awkwardly, "I can't tell my troubles to chance passers, sir."

"Nay, that's a pity," said he, "for they might be the very ones to help you. And I would not have you think me a night-roamer up to no good. I am only late abroad because I had run short of milk for the morning." So saying, as though to reassure her, he produced a bottle of milk from under his cloak.

Margery straightway forgot he was a stranger, forgot everything but what was in his hands, and she cried joyfully, "Oh, sir, you *can* help me! It was for want of milk that I was unhappy."

"To think of it!" exclaimed the Stranger. "Why, if it can make you happy, it is yours, for—what shall we say?—that pair of silver trifles in your ears."

"These? Oh, not these!" cried Margery. Then, looking at him pitifully, she said, "I know you now."

"You may do," said the Stranger; "but what of it? Hark!" He held up his finger, and through an open window in the Parsonage floated a little whimper that hurt her heart. The Stranger tapped his bottle. "Milk for the child," he said.

"Oh, dear Lord," whispered Margery, clasping her hands, "forgive me—I can't help it!" Then she undid her hands, pulled the bells from her ears, and dropped them at the Stranger's feet.

"Here is the bottle," said he; "but you must agree to abandon your post of bell-ringer for the rest of the month, and you must not buy, beg, borrow, or steal other bells in the place of these. Is this a bargain?"

She nodded, snatched the bottle, and ran. "Look, look!" she cried a moment later, bursting into the room where the Poor Parson's wife was trying to sing the baby to sleep. But she barely waited to hear the mother's cry of joy before she fled to her room, and locked herself in to pray.

In the morning the Poor Parson came cheerfully to breakfast, saying, "Where is that Margery of ours? We'll need her soon."

"I haven't seen her," said his wife. "Go call her, Frank."

He went, but could not find her in any of the rooms, so then he searched the garden, calling her name. She made no answer, but in the shrubbery he heard a rustle, and paused. "Are you there, Margery? Come, my father is waiting for you."

Slowly the bushes parted, and her white face looked at him through the green boughs. "Oh, Frank, I dare not come!"

"Dare not!" he repeated. "Why!—where are your earings, dear?"

She murmured, "I gave them away to a strange dark man, for milk."

Then Frank understood. He held out his arms, and she came into them, trembling. "It is not your fault," he said, "it is mine. My sin began it all. I sinned for myself; what my father did, he did for me, as you and my mother have done

it for the child. But Margery," he said suddenly, "why should the child not save us all?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Go tell my father your tale at once," the young man said, and went quickly into the house. She obeyed, with a faint hope in her heart; and, just as she had finished speaking, and while the anxiety was still new upon his parents' faces, Frank came into the room with the baby in his arms. It was cooing with content, after its morning bottle.

"Here's your new bell-ringer, father," said Frank. "Come, bless the baby's coral!"

In the annals of Dorner we find that on December the Eighteenth, 18—, the people were rung to church by a baby's coral. And an innocent sight it must have been to see the child kicking and crowing in its cradle in the belfry, and biting its ring of bells while the sluggards of Dorner ambled to their places. All through his sermon the face of the Poor Parson shone with joy, for his heart was singing within him that his child had saved his parish.

"Ay, my darling, and you shall again come Christmas Day," said he, fondling the baby when they were home again, "and that is the last Sunday in the year. Then Dorner Bells will ring the New Year in."



Margery . . . took her hands from her ears, and looked blushing from the Poor Parson to his wife.

But the child was not to ring its coral twice. All the week long it grew thinner and paler for want of nourishment, and on Christmas Eve the Poor Parson, his wife, his niece, and his son were nearly driven to despair. Once more both Frank and Margery went tramping the countryside to beg for milk in Christ's name, while the Poor Parson knelt and prayed on one side of the cradle, and his wife on the other stared out at the wild sky.

"Husband," she said bitterly, "the child is dying. Do you think the Christ will be born to-night? Look, the clouds are so heavy there's no place for a star, and the wind's so high it would blow it away."

"Hush, hush!" he said. "Oh, pray with me that the little one may live to ring the people in."

"Yes, it will live that long," said Alice brokenly, "but it will never see the New Year. Oh, God!" she prayed in her heart, "send the Stranger, and whatever he asks, I will give him!"

"My God," prayed the Poor Parson, "let not the Stranger come, lest I give him what he asks!"

They fell asleep, praying, on either side of the cradle. Then midnight came, and the sky was starless, and the wind so high that the roaring of a creature in its agony was drowned in it. And a shadow fell on the child's cradle, as the Stranger stooped over it. The child stared up at him. Very softly the Stranger touched the coral. The child gripped it. A very little force

would have served, but that was forbidden. The Stranger then drew from his pocket a warm, full bottle of milk, and put the teat to the baby's lips. The little mouth began to work and suck, the little hands dropped what they had held and clutched the familiar comfort they knew well. The Stranger took the coral so quietly that it made no sound; stood up, smiled at the sky, and disappeared. In the morning the parents awoke, and found their child sleeping peacefully, clasping its half-empty bottle.

"Husband, look!" cried the Poor Parson's wife. "God has saved our child, for His Child's sake!"

For at midnight, Polly, their cow, had brought forth, and in her anguish had wandered into the church and crouched in the belfry. There she now lay in great content, licking the trembling calf that sucked at her udders. Over her stood Joe, the great bull, who was the calf's father. And as she lay, and he stood, they slowly swung their heads from side to side, and the iron bells on their necks clanged loud with a joyful sound.

"Husband, husband!" cried the Poor Parson's wife, her face running with tears, "go bless the creatures' bells."

"There is no need, beloved," the Poor Parson said, "for



That evening Frank walked with Margery in the lane, and said to her, "Do you remember how you scolded me, Madge?"

But the Poor Parson gazed in the cradle and said: "The coral is gone." He buried his face in his hands. Into the room as he spoke came Margery and Frank, pale and worn-out. They, too, sat down by the cradle, understanding all. None of them dared try to comfort the Poor Parson in his grief. Not knowing what to do, they waited in silence. Presently he raised his head. "I must put on my surplice," he said, "and preach my Christmas sermon."

His wife said in a low voice: "There will be none to hear you but us."

"Then I will preach to you," he said. "It is time. Go to church and take the child too. You at least need no bells to ring you in."

"But father!" exclaimed Frank, starting to his feet, "the bells are ringing! Listen!"

His father stared at him. "We—we are feverish—we think we hear them," he stammered.

"But I hear them too!" said Margery.

"And so do I!" cried the Poor Parson's wife. "And, husband, look!"

She pointed out of the window, and over the fields afar they saw the people coming. Snatching up the child, she ran out of the house, and the others followed her. At the West door of the church they stopped, and gazed at the strangest sight ever seen there.

God has done it." Now, as he spoke, and before a single churchgoer had arrived, there came a hasty step at the North door, and the Stranger himself appeared in the belfry. Rushing to the beasts he cried aloud, "Give me your bells! The Parson's baby, whom you love, is starving! Give me your bells, and I will give you—"

"Moo-ooo!" lowed Polly, in her rich, deep voice. "Moo-ooo!" And to the listeners she seemed to be saying, "Milk for the child?" and then, in the pride of her heavy udders, to be laughing.

For one moment the Stranger shook his impotent arms aloft. The movement threw open his cloak, and exposed his red ribbon. It caught the eye of Joe, the great bull, the danger of the countryside. What happened

was too quick to be described. But the next moment the Stranger had disappeared through the South door, and for ever.

Antiquaries will tell you that on December the 25th, 18—, the sluggards of Dormer were rung to church by cow-bells. And a holy sight it must have been to see the patient beasts moving their great necks from side to side, while the little one lay and sucked.

On New Year's Eve, when his child was beginning to grow round and rosy once again, the Poor Parson stepped into the belfry and rang the New Year in with Dormer Bells.



Over her stood Joe, the great bull, who was the calf's father. . . . They slowly swung their heads . . . and the iron bells on their necks clanged loud.

A CHRISTMAS FANTASY.



PIERROT'S CHRISTMAS: MASKS AND FACES.

FROM THE DRAWING BY M. WHEELER.

Brother Francis Preaches to the Birds.

FROM THE PAINTING BY PAUL MARIE SIBRA. EXHIBITED IN THE PARIS SALON, 1926.



The Sermon in the Wood.

The little wood was very full of sounds,
For many birds had gathered there to sing;
The chestnut boughs swung softly murmuring,
The gold-winged flies hummed in their dizzy
rounds.

Then there moved slowly from the vine-shagged
hill
A lean, quaint figure in a russet gown;
And all the little birds, grey, black, and brown,
Sang, "Francis comes! Now let us all be still!"

The path he followed ran into the wood,
And as he passed among the high, hushed
trees,
Dark foxgloves lifted them to touch his knees,
And pearl-pale chestnuts bent to brush his hood.

They heard him say, "Oh, all ye things that are,
Praise God . . . let all things praise Him . . .
lizard gay,
And plodding ass, and fleet wolf tawny-grey;
By day, the daisy, and by night, the star!"

They hearkened, as Assisi hearkened then
To that strange voice, which strange, wild
powers obeyed;
And near him fluttered, blithe and unafraid,
The freckled thrush, the linnet and the wren.

He stood, the sunlight on him clear and sweet,
The silent branches over him unstirred;
He raised his hands . . . to either swooped a bird,
And there were birds like blown leaves round
his feet.
DOROTHY MARGARET STUART.



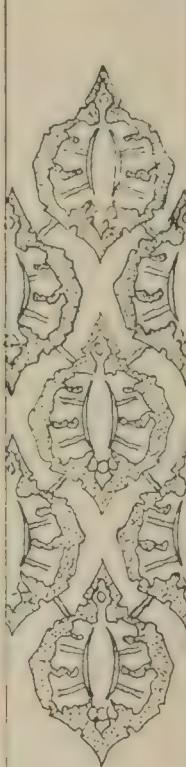
NICOLETTE, AS A CHILD, IS SOLD BY THE SARACENS TO THE VISCOUNT OF BEAUCAIRE.

"Son," answered the father, "this may not be. Put Nicolette from mind. For Nicolette is but a captive maid, come hither from a far country, and the Viscount of this town bought her with money from the Saracens, and set her in this place. He hath nourished and baptized her, and held her at the font. On a near day he will give her to some young bachelor, who will gain her bread in all honour."



NICOLETTE ESCAPES OVER THE WALLS OF BEAUCAIRE INTO THE MOAT.

"The wall was very ruinous, and mended with timber, so she climbed the fence, and went her way till she found herself between wall and moat. Gazing below, she saw that the fosse was very deep and perilous, and the maid had great fear. 'Ah, God,' cried she, 'should I fall, my neck must be broken; and, if I stay, tomorrow shall I be taken, and men will burn my body in a fire!'"



NICOLETTE BIDS FAREWELL TO AUCASSIN AT HIS PRISON WINDOW.

"Thus she fared until she chanced upon the tower where her lover was prisoned. Nicolette hid herself among the pillars, wrapped close in her mantle. She set her face to a crevice of the tower, which was old and ruinous, and there she heard Aucassin weeping within, making great sorrow for the sweet friend whom he held so dear."



NICOLETTE IS BROUGHT BACK TO CARTHAGE IN A SARACEN GALLEY.

"So the oarsmen rowed until the galley cast anchor beneath the city of Carthage, and when Nicolette gazed on the battlements and the country round about, she called to mind that there had she been cherished, and from thence borne away when but an unripe maid; yet she could clearly remember that she was the daughter of the King of Carthage, and once was nourished in the city."

"AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE."

A FAMOUS LOVE STORY THAT MINSTRELS MAY HAVE TOLD AT MANY A CHRISTMAS HEARTH IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

FROM PAINTINGS BY E. OSMOND. EXTRACTS FROM "AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE," AND OTHER MEDIEVAL ROMANCES AND LEGENDS. TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY EUGENE MASON. (DENT, EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY.)



"A Dainty Rogue in Porcelain."

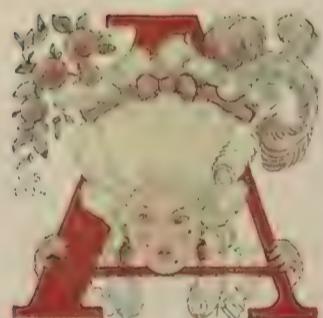


THE PALM-TREE IN THE CRYSTAL.

by

ROBERT RAMSEY GRANT.

Illustrated by GEORGE BARBIER.



BOVE the fan - maker's shop at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers there lived, in the year 1781, a sorceress of vast powers and infinite discretion. To seek her counsels many a perturbed lady climbed the fan-maker's creaking stairs. Some of these ladies were a little afraid of her tawny owl; others cast anxious glances at her bandy-legged attendant myrmidon. But her assurances that the owl was a tame one and the myrmidon a deaf-mute set most of them at their ease again. As for Germaine, Marquise de

Chastelroux, she found the sorceress more disconcerting than either of her familiars. She would fain have withdrawn her hand, but the podgy clasp tightened upon her fluttering fingers.

" You have come to me," remarked the sorceress darkly, " not because you cannot have what you want, but because you do not know what it is."

" Do you expect me to tell you if that is true ? " asked Germaine, with the tip of her furred fan hovering nervously at her lips.

" Madame, I do not. Another grace I may beg—but later on. You are a lady for whom many people would do much. These cards reveal little. Let us try the crystal now."



She would fain have withdrawn her hand, but the podgy clasp tightened upon her fluttering fingers....



"A bride with grey eyes that are not willing to dwell long upon the bridegroom. . . ."



"A negro kneels before him, and offers him two birds . . . "

With a magnificent gesture, the sorceress swept aside the eight gaudy oblongs of pasteboard set forth upon the green cloth. From a round yellow box she drew out an orb of dusky glass. Germaine's breath came faster. Whose image would appear in that grey, glimmering ball? Not her husband's. Oh, assuredly, not *his*! But would Maurice de Breuil's herculean figure, his dark, challenging, derisive face become visible? And, if so, would she feel more inclined to answer Maurice's importunate prayers as he hoped and believed that she must?

"I see a palm-tree in the crystal," murmured the witch; "I see many trees—such trees as do not grow in France. It is a strange, a perilous place that I see."

"Can you tell me where it is? Is it an island, by any chance?"

"An island, yes," returned the witch quickly; "but the name I cannot tell. I see a Frenchman there. He is not happy. A negro kneels before him, and offers him two birds."

"What is he like?" asked Germaine, in a troubled voice. "Is he very plain? Is he—is he very thin? Is he dark?"

"The negro? He is of the usual complexion of negroes."

"No, no. I meant the gentleman before whom he kneels."

"The crystal is growing dim," said the sorceress firmly, "very dim indeed. Only a palm-tree remains. The French gentleman is not visible now. The negro, too, is gone."

"Can you not make the picture come back? Will you not try?"

"It would be useless to try. But I see another now. Rose-garlands. A picture of the past, not the present. A wedding. A bride with grey eyes that are not willing to dwell long upon the bridegroom. She will never love that man."

Germaine's eyebrows rose. Probably not, if he were—as she supposed—Chastelroux. She had reached that conclusion herself, some time ago. But to hear her own opinion enunciated by this formidable female made her wonder suddenly if it were possible that they might both be mistaken.

"You have told me enough," she said, lifting her mask from the green table-cloth; "I must go."

"One moment, Madame. I have a message for you—from the Unseen Powers. When you know what you want, you will have it. And when that time comes, *you will think of me*." Through the mask-holes a pair of grey eyes looked at her in some alarm. "Fear nothing, Madame. I do not ask for more gold. I ask you only to write to me—three lines, maybe four. I can influence the lives of ladies whose handwriting I hold." (Which was true, though not as Germaine understood it.)

"I have not told you my name," demurred the Marquise; "you promised not to ask it."

"I do not ask it, Madame. Sign your letter 'The Palm-Tree in the Crystal.' I shall remember. I have never seen such trees in my crystal before."

On her slow homeward way in her jolting coach, which was limned in every panel with the armorial bearings of the illustrious family of Chastelroux, the Marquise pondered deeply. Palm-trees. Odd that the creature should have seen palm-trees in her ridiculous crystal! The Governorship of the Island of Tatou, off the coast of Senegal, was vacant. Germaine had been thinking much about that Governorship during the past week. It was in her power—she knew it—to choose the new Governor from among her friends—or her foes. The wife of the Minister concerned had lost large sums to her at faro, and had not attempted to repay them, unless it were with sweet promises. The Minister himself was a restless, ambitious fellow, much dominated by his spendthrift wife, and proudly devoted to their nine-year-old son, for whom he was already eager to secure friends and alliances among families more ancient than his own. Yes; Germaine could, if she pleased, choose the new Governor of Tatou. The man chosen would have to obey. It was not a remarkably healthy spot, though said to be rich in palm-trees. One might return, if the King so willed; on the other hand, one might not. What a pity the crystal had grown dim so quickly! For that red-wigged horror of a woman evidently possessed a queer streak of intuition. (As a matter of sober history, she *did*.)

There was a great masquerade at the house of the Minister that evening. Germaine resolved, as she sat in the coach homeward bound from the fan-maker's at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers, that she would make sure of that Governorship before the sun rose again, or die. And she neither wished nor expected to die yet awhile. As for the second vision, it was perturbing in its own way. Beyond doubt the bridegroom was François-Antoine-Marie, Marquis de Chastelroux, and the bride, herself. But for the rest—well, red-wigged witches should not be too pontifical in the enunciation of their personal opinions.

If the Marquise had glanced out of the coach-window as the four horses turned into the courtyard of the Hôtel Chastelroux she would have seen, and might have recognised, a sinister face among the little knot of scowling idlers by the wrought-iron gates. It might have startled her to notice that the owner of the face aforesaid was in conversation with two of the idlers, for when last she had

beheld him, not two hours before, she had been told that he was a deaf-mute. However, she glanced neither to right nor left, and the myrmidon of the sorceress sped back to the rue des Cordeliers as fast as his bandy legs would bear him.

Germaine returned from the masquerade in the dark, early hours of the next day. Her head ached with the weight of the coloured plumes piled high upon it, and she hastened to free herself of both her headdress and her outer robe of azure gauze and blossoming garlands—the appropriate and recognisable trappings of a shepherdess in the Paris of Marie Antoinette. As she emerged from her dressing-room, she saw that candles were alight in the little grey-and-gold salon where the Marquis was wont to retire in order to study the works of MM. Crébillon and Marivaux, and the reports of his stewards, his gamekeepers, and his huntsmen. Germaine went softly in, her pearl-coloured gown brushing its vast folds against the spindle-shanked golden chairs without a sound. De Chastelroux was standing by the unshuttered window and looking down into the courtyard where lacqueys and linkmen were astir about the now empty coach.

"François!" said Germaine.

In the two years since their marriage she had never called him by his name, nor had he called her by hers since the day—a day that had come disconcertingly soon—when she made it clear to him that he was a superfluous and ineffectual figure in the landscape of her life. At the sound of her voice, he swung round and came slowly towards her, his usually pale and impassive features strangely flushed, and his thin shoulders heaving as if he were out of breath. "Madame, I had not thought to see you so soon. But I have that to say to you that were best said now." Germaine inclined her head.

"I did not spend my evening—as I expected to spend it—in solitude," said the Marquis, in a harsh, grating voice. "I had a visitor—a charming person, whose society I found most stimulating—and who has left me his address in case I should wish him to visit me again. But there may hardly be time for that."

Germaine looked at him, the pearls trembling in her ears, but she said no word.

"My visitor came—like you—from the masquerade at the house of the Minister. He left a little before you did. I fear—I very much fear—that he had not been invited. I imagine that he went in the character of a lacquey. His legs did not suit the part."

Beneath the jerky, sarcastic phrases, Germaine thought she could hear a muffled note of pain.

"My visitor," the Marquis continued, "saw and heard much that interested him—and me. You had an earnest conversation with your hostess, Madame. And another with your host. And you were seen to kiss an astonished—but I hope not ungrateful—small boy. Finally, you were seen to receive a scroll from the Minister's hand—and to take it into an ante-chamber, and to write some words—five or six, I should guess—upon the scroll he had given you."

Germaine's hand rose unsteadily to the folds of her fichu. "All these things are true. I had asked that I might choose the new Governor of Tatou. My prayer was granted."

"You do not surprise me, Madame. One does not forgive Ministers' wives their gambling debts—one does not kiss their children—and ask no return."

"And you think," said Germaine, "that you know whom I have chosen?"

"Shall I describe him to you? He is not a handsome fellow. Ah, but no! He is a miserable piece of futility—an unfashionable fool who once went near to committing the



"I have that to say to you that were best said now...."



"You were seen to kiss an astonished—but I hope not ungrateful—small boy."

egregious folly of being a little in love with his own wife." From the faintly-fragrant inner folds of her pearl-coloured bodice Germaine drew the red-sealed scroll.

"You did not think I had brought this home with me," she said, with an inscrutable flicker of a smile. "To-morrow it must be taken to Versailles—to be countersigned by the King. But first I wanted to show it—to you."

De Chastelroux drew back. "Madame," he returned bitterly. "I knew you were cold; I knew that you could be capricious—I did not know you could be cruel."

"Tell me," said Germaine, "would the love of such a woman be worth having?"

The question startled him, but he tried to sustain his coldly sneering tone. "Maurice de Breuil might be able to tell you, Madame—if, indeed, he have not told you already."

Germaine's answer was to unfold the parchment scroll and, her shoulder touching his, to hold it between her hands so that it was on a level with his eyes. "Charming solicitude!" muttered the Marquis, "you want me to be sure that you have remembered all my baptismal names—"

Then he stopped with a jerk, and the warped lines of his face relaxed into blank amazement; for the name upon the parchment was that of Maurice de Breuil.

"François," Germaine was saying, "let me tell you the truth. Once—for a little while—I did think of doing what you thought I had done. But when I thought of Tatou—of such trees as do not grow in France—of such men as we do not see here—and when I thought—of you—I could not do it."

"Charming compunction!" murmured the Marquis, but the jibe was on his lips only, and his eyes were fixed desperately upon hers.

"I am afraid," said Germaine demurely, "that Monsieur de Breuil will have a painful surprise. Perhaps he will never know through whom it came. But if he should know—he will—perhaps—understand."

"He will be more fortunate than I!" remarked De Chastelroux, pushing back his wig with a perplexed and not very steady hand.

Germaine's touch fell gently on his sleeve. "This visitor of yours, François—he told you his address—shall I tell you, too? Above the fan-maker's shop, at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers."

Awkwardly and fumblingly, he laid his fingers over hers. "Charming omniscience!" he said. "But will you not lighten my darkness a little more, Madame?"

"Surely, I have much to tell you—if you will listen—if you care to hear."

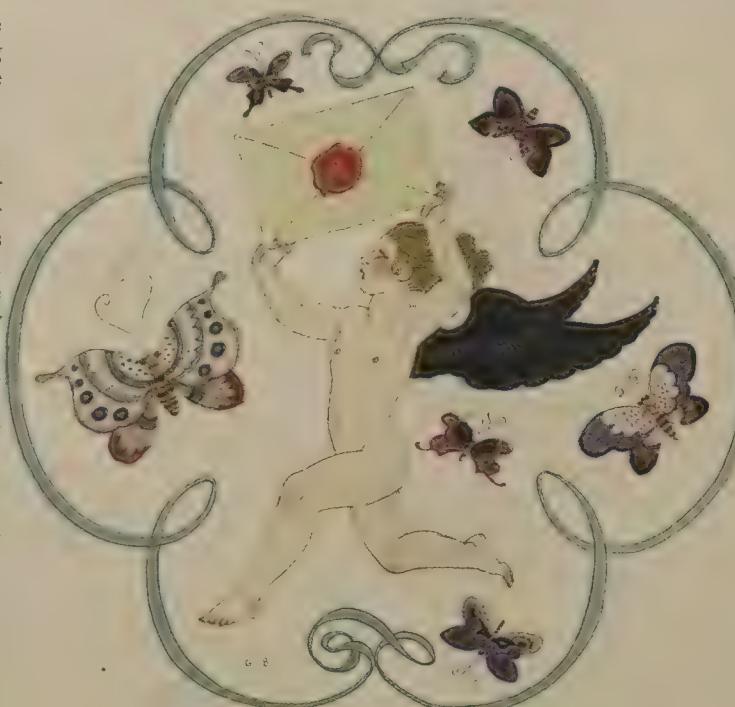
"My dear—Germaine," returned De Chastelroux, with a barely audible break between the adjective and the noun, "to anything you may have to tell me, need I say that I shall listen with the most profound attention?"

Two days later, Germaine de Chastelroux indited a letter to the sorceress above the fan-maker's at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers. It was conceived in these terms—

"Now that I know what I wanted, I also know that it was already mine. Deaf-mutes who have heard a little should not speak over-much."

"The Palm-Tree in the Crystal."

[THE END.]



ROBIN & the DRAGON

By
DOROTHY MARGARET STUART.

AUTHOR OF "BEASTS ROYAL",
"SWORD SONGS", "THE BOY
THROUGH THE AGES", ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
A. FORESTIER



A third boy who sat near them had neither an apple nor a bun. He was Robin, the baker's prentice, and his patched and faded garments were all floury from his work.

WOT you," said little Jenkyn, the baker's son, "I am to be an angel, and blow upon a golden trumpet, when we play our mystery play."

"And my father," declared Hugh, the cordwainer's first-born, "is to be a King—King Herod he is to be, and wear a crown, and stamp and roar like any lion, *he* is."

The two boys were perched on the river wall of the little Severn-side town of Upton Regis, dangling their heels over the cool, swift green water. Jenkyn had brought with him a sort of bun, made of an odd dab of dough, but he had yielded up half of it in return for three good bites out of Hugh's apple. A third boy who sat near them had neither an apple nor a bun. He was Robin, the baker's prentice, and his patched and faded garments were all floury from his work.

"What are you playing, you bakers?" asked Hugh, after a pause. "We cordwainers will play the Massacre o' the Innocents."

"We are playing Doomsday," said Jenkyn proudly. "My father is to be St. Michael. He will have great golden scales, to weigh the good souls and the bad."

"How will Master Cobb know which be the bad ones?" demanded Hugh.

"The bad ones will have black faces. I know. They are to be blackened with soot from our great chimney." Hugh laughed. "Oh, they will look brave! Who be they?"

"That I cannot tell. My father says they are hard to come by. No one wants to be a lost soul."

At this Robin pricked up his ears. Till that moment he had not the faintest hope that he might take any part in the open-air pageants that thrilled Upton Regis every summer. He was an orphan, without friends or kin, and though John Cobb, the baker, was no harsh master to his apprentices, it did not seem at all likely that he would give the younger of the two either leave to take part or the coin needful to buy a mask, or a wig, or a robe. The most Robin had dared to look forward to was a brief glimpse at one of the mystery plays from under a

friendly elbow, before he had to hurry home to sweep out the bake-house and feed the oven fire. But Jenkyn's words set him thinking. Rather than miss a chance of having his share in the fun he would cheerfully have allowed his comical little face to be daubed with all the colours of the rainbow. The idea of pretending to be a lost soul did not alarm him in the least. He would have been far more reluctant to don Jenkyn's white goose-wings, and an angel's garb would certainly not have suited his cocky nose, and his peaked chin, and his mop of rebellious red hair. Robin sat and mused, with his tattered elbows on his patched knees. It was worth trying. He would speak to his master about it that very night.

Master Cobb chanced to be in rare good humour when the hour came for him and his older apprentice, Matt, and young Robin to start kneading the stiff, greyish-brown dough for next day's bread. It was heavy work, and presently they all had to pause and recover their breath. Then Robin plucked up courage to speak.

"Master," he began, "Jenkyn saith how bad souls be hard to come by."

"Saith Jenkyn so? Faith, there are all too many such in the hosts of Lancaster," returned Master Cobb, who, like most of his fellow-townsmen, was a stout Yorkist.

Matt laughed—he always laughed at a joke, whether he could understand it or no—but Robin was desperately serious.

"Nay, but, Master," the boy began again, "'twas for the pageant—come Corpus Christi—when the bakers shall play Doomsday on the green."

"True enough, boy. We have a round dozen o' white souls, but never a black one yet. There shall I stand, with my great golden scales, and never a black soul to weigh on 'em. God wot it will not be so with blessed St. Michael himself, come Judgment Day!"

"Master," said Robin eagerly, "if I might but be one o' them—"

Cobb reflected for a moment. "Well, why not?" quoth he at last. "But, even so, you are but one imp—we need nine or ten lost souls, and a couple o' little devils."



Kneading the stiff, greyish-brown dough was heavy work, and presently they all had to pause and recover their breath. Then Robin plucked up courage to speak.

Delight sharpened Robin's wit. "Ay," cried he, "but I might feign to be more than one!"

"How so?"

"Why, by running round behind the stage and coming up to be weighed again! And I might be both a little devil *and* a lost soul—if I had a peaked cap, such as the little devils have in the picture on the church wall."

Matt roared at this idea, but Master Cobb thought it a good one.

"Well said, Robin! And if I beg Neighbour Nicholas to lend me his two apprentices, there will be three of ye—and if the three of ye keep running fast enough, ye will seem like an honest dozen."

Robin nearly jumped for joy. He was to be in the pageant—he, Robin Nobody, as Matt sometimes called him. What did he care if he frightened the folk with his black face? Deep in his heart he felt that that would not be the least of the fun. But Matt, who was seven years older, and who had been chosen to play the part of the long, scaly dragon whom St. Michael was to trample upon, was not altogether pleased that Robin Nobody was to be allowed to climb on to the creaking stage instead of watching wide-eyed from among the crowd.

The great Church festival of Corpus Christi, celebrated with pageants and processions all over Christendom five hundred years ago, is held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, and often falls towards the end of May or in the early days of June. The Wars of the Roses spoiled many of the sports of the country people in England, but here and there the Trade Guilds, who were always the chief performers, would not stop their miracle plays for all the King's horses and all the King's men. The people of Upton Regis, where Robin Nobody lived, were determined not to let their ancient customs die. The fishmongers would show how Noah's Ark was launched, and the skinners and tanners would represent the sacrifice of Isaac, the bakers and cooks would play Doomsday, and the cordwainers would enact the Massacre of the Innocents, even though the rival hosts of York and Lancaster should at that very moment be giving and taking hard knocks only a few leagues away. Indeed, they troubled their heads very little about the strife between the white rose and the red, unless when a company of bowmen came swinging over the hill and clamoured for bacon and ale, or a knot of steel-clad knights, now in flight, now in pursuit, clattered over the cobblestones and sent hens and geese and small children scurrying to shelter.

In the year of Robin's great adventure few big battles took place, but there were many skirmishes, and pleasant green meadows were trampled and hedges of rose and honeysuckle were broken down by the men-at-arms of either side. News travelled so slowly that the craftsmen of Upton Regis knew as little of the doings of the York and Lancaster lords in the next county as those same lords and their archers knew about the pageants being prepared for the feast of Corpus Christi.

Robin thought the long Spring days would never pass. Yet they were full of excitement for him, and for the other boys who were to have a share in the plays. Neighbour Nicholas agreed that his two lads, lazy Hob and greedy Wat, should be lost souls, though they themselves were not greatly delighted at the prospect. Jenkyn, of course, looked forward to blowing a blast on his golden trump, and also to tasting the roasted flesh of the fat goose whose wings were to adorn his own shoulders. Hugh, though there was no part for him in the Massacre of the Innocents, was excited because his father was to play King Herod, a roaring, stamping part, that everyone was eager to have. The rehearsals became more and more interesting as the festival drew near. Hugh's father nearly cracked both his voice and the trestle-platform when he practised talking and walking in King Herod's fearsome way, and Matt, the first time they got him in the dragon's weed, had great difficulty in getting out of it again, and began to be seriously alarmed lest he should have to spend the rest of his life clad in a garment of glittering, clanking scales. Neighbour Nicholas's two lads put little enthusiasm into *their* parts, but Robin pranced so wildly when he was a demon, and wrung his hands with such despair when he was supposed to be a lost soul, that Master Cobb could scarcely hold his huge gilded balance for laughing.

The one anxiety of the good folk of Upton Regis was lest the last days of May should bring with them that warm, steady rain that is so good for the fruit-trees and so bad for pageant-playing. Rain *did* fall upon Trinity Sunday, silvery and slow, not the bitter grey rain that beats down the standing corn and stains the field-flowers with dark mire. But after Sunday the weather was clear, and on Thursday it was pure gold.

As soon as the sun rose above the cloudless horizon the bells in the church-tower rang to summon the people to prayer. Robin, however, was awake long before sunrise. He listened to Matt's tranquil snoring—the two apprentices slept on straw, with round brown logs for pillows, in the attic above Master

Cobb's house—and wondered how anyone *could* sleep who was going to take part in the pageant of Doomsday so soon.

It had been planned that the pageants should begin shortly after the hour of noon, and should finish about five or six o'clock in the evening. But, as is often the case with inexpert performers, each episode took nearly twice as much time as the players had counted that it would. The shadows were lengthening on the grass, and the sky was going wine-red beyond the Welsh mountains, by the time that the cordwainers, whose play was last but one, were half-way through. Doomsday was to be enacted last of all.

The bakers had set up their stage at the end of the green farthest from the church, just where the woods began. It was an elaborate structure, two storeys high, the lower part, concealed by a painted curtain, serving as a dressing-room for the performers. A curtain of deep-blue linen sewn with stars of silver foil hung between two poles at the back. And on the turf behind the stage, some paces away, stood a wooden chest with a great big jutting iron key. This chest had been borrowed from Neighbour Nicholas, and it held the gilded scales of St. Michael, and the dragon's glittering weed, and the golden trump with which Jenkyn was to summon the good and the bad souls from their long sleep.

So excited was Robin he would not wait to see the end of the cordwainers' play, which took place at the other extremity of the green. Instead, he slipped away and ran round the back of the bakers' stage to make sure that everything was in order. He felt as if the whole responsibility for the success of the Doomsday episode rested upon his own shoulders. He, and Hob and Wat, had already donned their jerkins of stiff black canvas, and their faces had been bountifully besmeared with soot, but neither of his companions was yet upon the scene. Hob was intent upon a chunk of barley-bread and a small green apple, which Neighbour Nicholas had given him, and Wat was snatching forty winks in the shelter of the dim little space under the stage.

Robin could not bear to wait idly for the time to come. He turned the great creaking iron key, and dragged out the dragon's robe, and the gilded scales, and the goose-wings of Jenkyn. The trump he could not reach, for it lay in the very bottom of the chest, and the chest was three feet high. Still, except for the trump, Master Cobb should find everything in readiness when he came. However slow and awkward and confused the fishmongers or the cordwainers might be, the bakers of Upton Regis would soon show them how a pageant *ought* to be played!

Then Robin chanced to look up from his task, and he saw something which for the moment almost made his heart stand still. To the left of the thick strip of copse which fringed the green, the wooded hills rose westward until, less than a league away, their topmost ridge stood clear and treeless against the sky. And there, dark against the rosy gold, he could see a knot of men, some on horseback and some on foot, making their way to Upton Regis by the rough track that skirted the flank of the hill, and, dipping suddenly to the north of the belt of woodland, led straight to the green. They were too far off for Robin to see them very well, but he knew at once that these were no peaceful wayfarers.

Rumours had come of a skirmish between York and Lancaster on the Hereford border the day before, but nobody had paid much heed. The stragglers from such fights, if any chanced to reach Upton Regis, were often harmless fellows enough. Yet sometimes they were fierce folk, difficult to get rid of. If they were in pursuit of some noble fugitive, good for a fat ransom, they wanted to search houses and barns in quest of him. Robin's heart sank. To which class did these wayfarers belong? Must Doomsday be delayed, after all, or perhaps abandoned altogether? Robin shaded his eyes and peered anxiously at the farther end of the green. No, the crowd was not yet breaking up round the cordwainers' pageant, and he could see Master Cobb's new russet hood among them. He was just wondering whether he ought to run and whisper a word in his master's ear, when he heard a sound of stirring branches in the copse behind him. Robin swung round. A man was crouching in the deep grass at the foot of the trees; his face gleamed pale in the fading light, and, as Robin was on the point of uttering a little yelp of surprise, he laid his finger warningly upon his lip. Then a husky, breathless voice called to him.

"Come hither, boy!"

Wondering much, Robin obeyed.

"Is no one else near?" asked the stranger anxiously. Robin shook his head.

"Have you seen any horsemen over toward the hills?" This time Robin nodded vigorously.

The stranger rose to his feet with a sort of shuddering sigh, and then Robin could see that he was no common man-at-arms. He wore one of those close-fitting suits of fine, light-coloured leather such as knights were wont to wear under their battle-harness. From a heavy golden chain about his throat hung a

jewelled medallion of a horseman trampling upon a dragon. At his girdle of gilded hide swung an empty dagger-sheath and a pouch of wine-red velvet with a clasp of bronze. Stained though it was with dust and sweat, and pallid with fatigue, his was a gallant and a comely face. His right arm was bound in a gold-fringed scarf grimly streaked with blood.

"Boy," said the stranger softly, "if, indeed, you be a boy, and not an imp o' darkness—those horsemen are on my track. I am one of Duke Richard's knights. Deal faithfully by me, and richly will I reward you. Where can I hide till the rascals pass by?" As he spoke, he cast a longing glance at Neighbour Nicholas's great oaken chest, which stood yawning open.

Robin read his thoughts. "Your honour cannot hide *there*," quoth he sturdily. "That holds our gear for the pageant."

"The pageant—heaven pardon me, I had forgot—it is Corpus Christi day!" panted the knight, creeping a few steps further out of the copse. "Quick, boy—can I creep under the stage yonder?"

"Alack, no," cried Robin, barring the way; "Wat is asleep there—and there must the players don their gowns."

"The angel's trump lies in the bottom. He must climb in to reach it. Then we can clap down the lid upon him."

"But will he not roar and kick?"

"No one would hear—no one will go near that chest, till Doomsday be done. Do you hide among the trees again—I must call Matt, lest the others come first."

Off sped Robin, and the knight, after one hasty glance to make sure that the golden trump really *was* in the bottom of the chest, dodged behind the nearest tree. A moment later he saw Robin returning at a brisk trot, followed by a tall, lumbering youth whom he guessed to be Matt.

"Matt," panted Robin, "all the gear is ready—your dragon's weed, and Jenkyn's wings, and the great scales—but I cannot reach the trump—look where it lies!"

"I can reach it," vowed Matt, trying to lean over the chest without tumbling in. "Hey, I have it! No, I have not—a plague on 't, I can touch it, yet I cannot hold! Hey, Robin—here, Robin Nobody—give me a leg-up, and I will climb in."

This was just what that sly little imp of a Robin wanted



Matt fell with a crash into the chest, seized the trump, flung it forth, and was just about to climb out himself, when the knight, pouncing from behind the tree, banged down the lid.

Sprawling on the turf beyond the chest lay the glittering garment of scales in which Matt was to play the part of the dragon. The knight pounced upon it eagerly.

"Harkee, boy; I will wear this weed till the rascals pass by—and you shall never lack groats again."

"But my fellow Matt," protested Robin. "'Tis he you must ask—or our master."

"Nay," retorted the fugitive, "what two men know, the whole world knows. If I must die, then God pardon my sins! Oh!" he added furiously, "were my right arm but whole, and my good sword on my thigh! But to take a man unarmed, and unawares—"

"Sir," interrupted Robin, "there is but one thing to do. I will go call my fellow, Matt. If we can get *him* into the chest, and turn the key, you could wear the dragon's weed and no man know. But then must you lie on the stage, under the foot of Master Cobb."

"That will I," promised the knight, with a rueful smile. "It is the fortune of dragons to be trampled upon. But how can we get your fellow into the chest?"

him to say. Matt fell with a crash into the chest, seized the trump, flung it forth, and was just about to climb out himself, when the knight, pouncing from behind the tree, banged down the lid. Then, before Matt could utter the faintest squawk, the knight turned the key, pulled it out of the lock, and thrust it through his own girdle.

"Peace," called he, through the keyhole. "If you make a sound, you die!"

This dreadful threat completely cowed Matt, who was a craven, as most bullies are. He crouched in the chest, frightened and perplexed, and wondered stupidly what St. Michael would do without a dragon to trample upon.

Meanwhile, Robin was helping his new friend to struggle into the dragon's scaly robe. They were only just in time, for the cordwainers' pageant was over at last, the crowd had begun to scatter, and the players in the Doomsday episode were already streaming across the green. Foremost came Master Cobb, puffing as he came. Jenkyn trotted beside him, and Neighbour Nicholas and Neighbour Miles, and Hob, gnawing the core of his apple, were not far behind.

When Cobb saw Robin and the dragon waiting for him, he nodded approval. "Good lads," said he, "now we must bestir ourselves. All the folk follow. And he that forgetteth his lines shall have no share of the geese that we roast at home tonight." The dragon stretched out one of his fore-paws to draw Robin aside, and the knight's voice whispered hollowly within the grinning jaws, "Have I any lines to say?"

"No, Sir," Robin whispered back, "not one. You have but to be trampled upon by St. Michael."

Cobb and Nicholas and the rest had now plunged into the robing-room. Only Neighbour Miles, who was in charge of the stage properties, tarried behind.

"Is all in readiness?" he asked of Robin and the dragon. "Is the chest empty? Has Master Cobb his scales, and Jenkyn his trump and wings?"

The dragon nodded his head vigorously in reply, and Robin said: "Yea, truly, Master Miles—all things be here, and each player hath his own."

Reassured, Master Miles promptly rejoined his fellow-players beneath the stage, and Robin seized the opportunity to give

"I must go now," whispered Robin, "look, Wat is beckoning to me! Draw a little nearer to the stage, Sir—stand by the ladder—then I can call to you when it is time for you to come. But"—he hesitated a little—"but I must call you by the name of my fellow, Matt."

"Call me by what name you will," returned his new friend. "My life is in your two hands." As he stood by the ladder waiting his turn, the knight thought over Robin's instructions, and though he knew himself to be in deadly peril, an unarmed Yorkist with a band of fierce Lancastrians on his track, he could not help chuckling at the odd way he had hit upon to outwit them.

Meanwhile, the pageant of Doomsday had begun. He could hear the high-pitched voices of the players, the creaking of the planks, the clash of Michael's scales. Through the dragon's eye-hole he could catch a glimpse of the eager faces in the front ranks of the crowd, and, here and there, a wondering child hoisted on its father's shoulder. Then came a shrill squeak. Jenkyn had blown a blast upon his golden trump. There were cries of delight as the white-robed spirits began to climb on to the stage, and shouts of laughter, mingled with a



Three horsemen were thrusting their way through the people. . . . "Holloa, you yonder!" shouted he who seemed to be their leader.
"Cease your mumming and hearken to me!"

the dragon a few hints about his part. "At your first entering," said he, "you must make as if to devour the white souls, while we black souls dance round you. But when St. Michael smites at you with his falchion, fall you down flat. When he hath trampled upon you a little space, he will step forward and speak brave words to the people. While he is speaking, you can crawl off the stage and down the ladder at the other side."

The knight tried to listen attentively to these instructions, but in spite of himself, his mind kept wandering off to his pursuers.

"Harkee, Robin," said he, "those rascals that you saw upon the hill-top—at what pace were they coming?"

"Only at a foot-pace, Sir. And while I watched them—just before your honour called to me—they on horseback halted, and then they on foot turned back towards the woods."

"What next?"

"When they on foot had departed, they on horseback pressed on again without them."

"Then," said the dragon, low in his hollow jaws, "then there is one grain of hope for me. The archers had no horses—and their captain is the worst rascal of all."

few cries of fear, as Robin and his two taller and slower fellow-demons appeared from the opposite side.

After the black-clad players had scampered twice or thrice round the back of the blue curtain in order to jump on to the scene again, Robin popped his head around the corner and called softly, "Matt, Matt, come hither!"

The obedient dragon hurried forward, and climbed, as well as his dangling tail would let him, up the little ladder on the left. The onlookers gasped. Truly, he was a gorgeous monster! His mask had fearsome jaws, jagged with huge teeth, and his robe was sewn with glittering scales of peacock-blue. Mindful of Robin's instructions, he crawled forward with as fierce an air as he could assume. Hob and Wat shuffled awkwardly beside him, but Robin was skipping all over the place, the very image of a mocking imp. When Jenkyn saw the dragon drawing near, his golden trump quivered in his hand. And, though he firmly believed that Matt's face was behind that grinning mask, he felt queerly inclined to run away when the creature reared up on its hind-legs and waved its paws at him. But St. Michael stepped forward in the nick of time, and when he

[Continued on Page 34]

The Pageantry of Discovery.



NORSE VIKINGS REACH THE SHORES OF GREENLAND.

It is written in the old Icelandic chronicles that a certain Norwegian chief, Eric Rauda, son of Thorwald, having been banished for three years for slaying his neighbour, Eyolf, sailed in quest of a great land which it was rumoured Gunbiorn the sailor had discovered, west of Iceland. Eric Rauda found a country which he named Greenland, and an arm of the sea which he called Erics Sund. After three years he returned and persuaded many of his countrymen to sail thither under his command. The voyage was perilous, and of 25 ships 13 were wrecked; but Eric Rauda had established the great Norwegian Colony in Greenland. These things happened, the chronicles tell, in the year 982, but some say 932, and others believe that sailors from Hamburg had crossed the northern seas yet earlier.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GUSTAVE ALAUX.

The Pageantry of Discovery.



COLUMBUS LANDS ON THE ISLAND OF SAN SALVADOR.

Excited by the idea of discovering a new route to India by sea, Columbus had a bold plan based on his knowledge of the earth's roundness. Encouraged by the error of cosmographers, who followed Ptolemy in believing the earth to be much smaller than it is, he planned to reach India by sailing continually westward. With three caravels, the "Santa Maria," "La Pinta," and "La Niña," he left Palos de Moguer on Friday, August 3, 1492. After a fair voyage, only troubled by threats of mutiny of the frightened crews, on the night of October 11 or 12 Columbus spied land. The ships kept in the offing, and at break of day Columbus, in full dress, set foot on land amidst the surprised natives. This island, which is one of the Bahamas, and called by the natives Guanahani, Columbus named San Salvador.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GUSTAVE ALAUX.

The Pageantry of Discovery.



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE RECEIVES QUEEN ELIZABETH IN THE "GOLDEN HIND."

Sir Francis Drake was the second navigator to sail round the world. He left Plymouth with five ships on December 13, 1577; crossed the Straits in seventeen days, sailed southward, and probably discovered Cape Horn. Returning northward, he played the pirate in splendid style on seas where the Spaniards thought they were absolutely safe. He then endeavoured to return to England by seeking a way round the north of America, ascended the north-west American coast up to Latitude 48, and discovered lands where no European had ever been; but the extreme cold made him renounce his project. He finally returned to Plymouth on September 26, 1580, after a voyage of two years and ten months. He was received with honour by Queen Elizabeth, who dined on board his ship, the "Golden Hind," at Deptford.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GUSTAVE ALAUX.

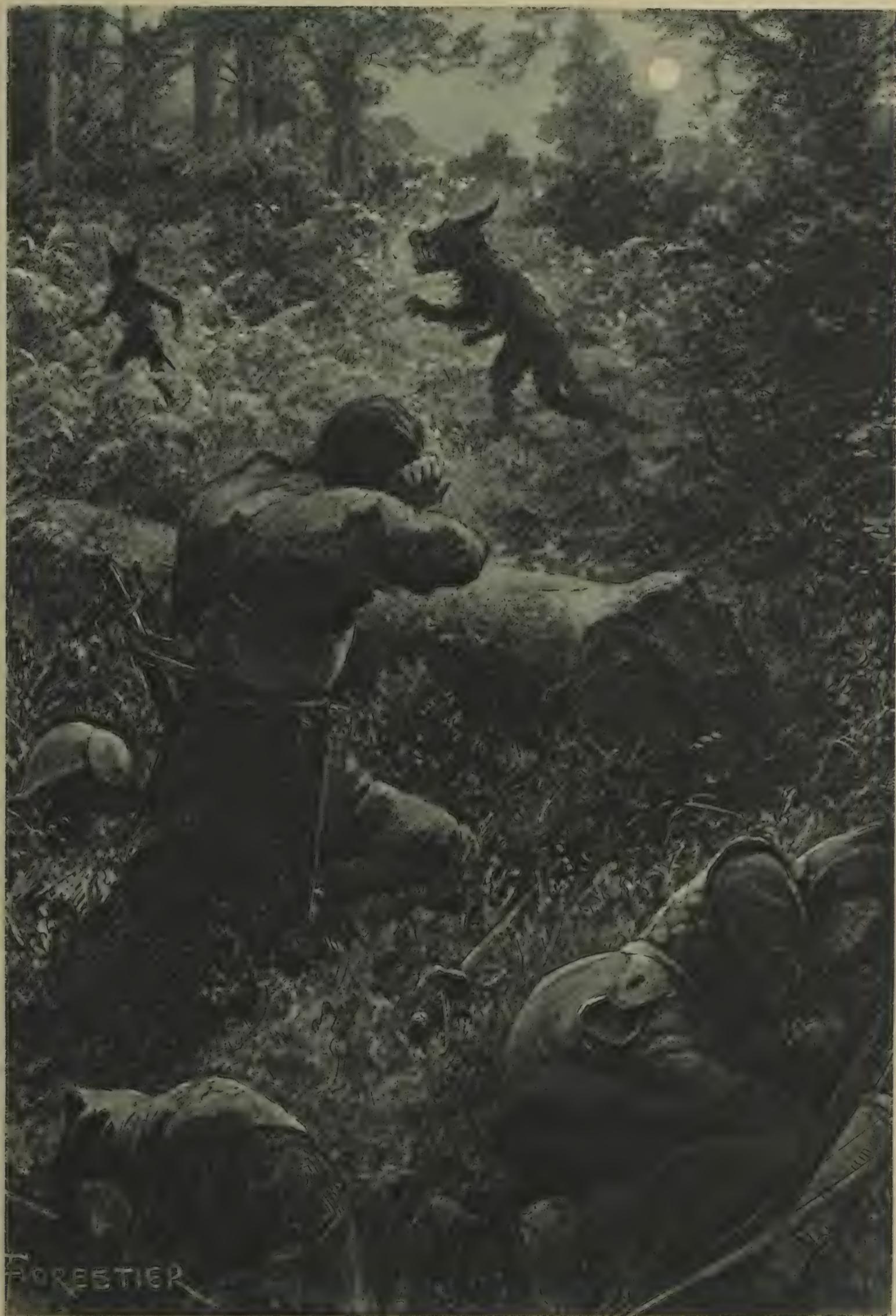
The Pageantry of Discovery.



CAPTAIN COOK LANDS IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Captain Cook, who had previously made two voyages round the world, left Plymouth for his third and last great expedition on July 12, 1776, with two ships, the "Resolution" and the "Discovery," in the hope of finding a north-west passage. After touching at the Cape of Good Hope, Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand, he visited many islands in Oceania. On January 18, 1778, he discovered another group of large islands, and was received by the natives with marks of friendship. In memory of Lord Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty, Cook named the group the Sandwich Islands. (They are now known as Hawaii.) From thence he sailed northward in the hope of finding the long-looked-for strait, but returned to winter in the Sandwich Islands, and was killed by natives on February 14, 1779.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GUSTAVE ALAUX.



FORESTIER

The archer turned round, and then, with a gurgling shriek, he fell upon his knees and hid his face in his hands, while the two weird figures that had so terrified him hurried past, and were swallowed up by the bracken on the further side of the clearing.

brandished his silver-painted wooden blade the dragon fell prone, with a loud clashing of its blue scales. It was just as this moment that a stir and commotion on the edge of the crowd made St. Michael pause, and turned the noses of both the white souls and the black to the point whence the clamour came. Three horsemen were thrusting their way through the people, who gazed at their steel caps and buff jerkins in no little dismay.

"Holloa, you yonder!" shouted he who seemed to be their leader. "Cease your mumming and hearken to me!"

Master Cobb was right loth to obey, but he dared not offend these unwelcome strangers. So he stepped forward and said, "What would you, friend?"

"I am the Seneschal of Ross," returned the spokesman roughly. "I and my fellows are on the track of one Sir Lionel Ferrars, an enemy to our liege lord, King Henry. Has any man here had sight of him—a barehead knight, on foot, with a gash in his right arm betwixt the elbow and the wrist?"

Heads were shaken and hands were lifted on all sides in token of denial. Most of the people were Yorkists, and there would be few who did not hope that the fugitive knight might escape his pursuers.

"Take heed how ye deal with me," growled the Seneschal. "Take heed, I say, lest ill befall the whole pack o' ye."

"Gentle Seneschal," said Master Cobb anxiously, "no stranger has come among us this day. See for yourself—seek where ye will. Only, I pray ye, hinder not the playing of Doomsday, lest dusk fall ere the dragon be slain."

"I'll swear," interposed the second horseman, "that he hath gone by way of the woods, steering towards Wales. Who but a fool would take refuge *here*, in the midst o' the pageants and the mumming?"

"If he have taken to the woods," swore his comrade, "the archers will catch 'un."

"Gentle Seneschal," called St. Michael from the stage. "Good now, hinder Doomsday no further. Or, if it please you, tarry. We bakers feast our friends to-night. Three geese turn on the spit even now."

The horsemen consulted together for a moment. Their leader seemed disposed to continue the search for Sir Lionel, but his comrades persuaded him that their quarry had sought escape through the woods, and that the bowmen must assuredly catch him ere he reached the Welsh border. Finally, they all dismounted, tethered their horses to the nearest tree, and took their places in the foremost ranks of the crowd.

"Hasten, Michael, lest the geese be marred!" they shouted to Master Cobb.

So the pageant began again, but in a somewhat half-hearted fashion. St. Michael was vexed at having been interrupted at the most exciting moment. Neighbour Nicholas, a timid man, was shaking in his shoes; the white souls whispered anxiously apart; and Robin was almost too nervous to remember what to do next. Doomsday ended in a rather foolish scramble, but before it came to an end the dragon and the smallest of the black souls had slipped quietly off the crowded stage and had withdrawn into the shelter of the trees. Not a sound came from the great chest, where Matt, like a true philosopher, was enjoying a nap until such time as someone should come and set him free.

Sir Lionel pushed back his mask and drew a deep breath of relief. He knew that the three Lancastrians would be well employed for the next hour or two, and that the first and greatest of his perils was past.

"What's to do now?" he mused aloud. "My one way to safety lies through the woods to Wales. Yet what if I should lose myself for lack of a guide?"

Robin heard and understood. He was beginning to wonder what the end of his odd adventure might be, and to wish himself safely out of it.

Very timidly he touched the knight's scaly sleeve.

"If your honour," he began, "would please to doff the dragon's weed—"

"Not so fast, not so fast, good Robin," returned Sir Lionel. "You are not rid of me yet."

These words alarmed Robin a little. He glanced all round. Nobody was near. St. Michael could be heard roaring the last lines of his part, while the Lancastrians urged him loudly to hasten lest the geese should burn.

"Is there a plain path through the woods that a man might follow by the light of the moon?" asked the knight.

Robin shook his head. "There is but a little track—I know it well—it runneth hither and thither—and it will lead you forth upon the open heath this side o' Hylton Parva."

"Hylton Parva," echoed Sir Lionel. "There is a house of black monks there, and the Prior is my good friend. Boy, guide me through the woods to-night, and I swear by the blessed St. George whose image I bear that you shall never lack a friend hereafter."

"But my master, Sir?"

"I will give you a talisman to turn his wrath aside—a golden one. Let us go."

To do Robin justice, it was generous anxiety for the safety of an unarmed man in dire danger, rather than the prospect of any reward, that gave him courage. He had wit enough, too, to see that Master Cobb would probably pardon his prank if he brought home a groat or two with him.

"I will be your guide, Sir," quoth he, "and gladly. But the dragon's weed—"

"Nay," said Sir Lionel, laughing, "heavy though it be, it is a rare disguise. And who knows what enemies we may meet? The bowmen are seeking me yonder."

"Ay, Sir," cried Robin, "but unless they know every foot o' the way, they might seek all night and yet run ever in a circle."

"Say you so? Why, then, you give me good heart again. But come. Let us be stirring. I hope, Robin, that when you win home again, there will be something left of the roast goose besides the beak and the bones!"

The sun dipped beneath the Welsh hills, and the moon was climbing the clear, luminous summer sky. The dewy bracken and the knotted and tangled trees shone silver and green-grey in her strange and lovely light. Never had the creatures who lived in the woods seen such a quaint pair of wayfarers as those who followed the little winding path that night. A dragon, with blue scales that glittered weirdly in the moonshine, and a black-faced imp with bright red hair! Small wonder that the brown owls called to each other to come and look, and the bats flitted in frightened circles, and the rabbits bolted into their burrows among the fern. As he and Robin plodded along the narrow path, Sir Lionel, in a cautiously-lowered voice, told his guide how the Lancastrians had come upon him suddenly, when he had laid aside his heavy armour, and was watering his horse at a wayside pond; and how, despite the odds against him, he had beaten them off at first, and had leapt into the saddle and got clear away. Then, said he, he saw that his good steed would be but small help to him, for the road sloped uphill, and soon, if he followed it, he would be seen against the skyline by the pursuers in the rear. His only hope was to dismount, and plunge into the thick woods, and outflank the Lancastrians on foot. And this was what he had done. Slowly, buffeted by branches and snared by knotted roots, he had made his way to that place where Robin had first beheld him, on the fringe of the green at Upton Regis. To all these things Robin listened eagerly, his boyish imagination thrilling at the tale. "Wot you, good imp," said Sir Lionel, when the tale was told, "the captain of the archers is an old acquaintance of mine. He was once one of us. Heaven send us no more such! He robbed and plundered wherever we made a halt—and there was a day when he stripped an old dame's hen-roost and I came near stringing him up on the nearest tree. The rogue had had enough of Yorkist service after that. He fled to the Duke of Lancaster—who, maybe, is less tender of old dames and their hens—but when I saw his face to-day, I remembered—and when he saw *mine*, I knew he did not forget. So, my good imp, it was well for me that I could turn dragon before the rogue came up with me."

The dragon and the imp were now in the depths of the wood, where the bracken was highest and the trees stood closest together. When they had gone a little farther, Robin, who walked ahead, halted and held up his hand.

"I hear voices!" he whispered.

Sir Lionel strained his ears to listen. "And I! Whence do they come, think you?"

"Now are we near a clearing in the wood where the charcoal-burners sometimes make their fires," returned Robin. "Maybe the archers are there."

The knight hesitated only a moment. Then he pulled the dragon's mask over his face. "Forward, Robin," said he. "Forward, good imp! Those rascals reck nothing of the pageants yonder. They will think we come from another world, and they will not lay a hand upon us!"

So the dragon and the imp continued to advance along the narrow path between the high bracken and the tangled trees. Two minutes later they reached the edge of the clearing, and then they saw that Robin had guessed aright. One archer was sprawling fast asleep on a carpet of fine moss, and the other two, of whom one was Sir Lionel's arch-enemy, were sitting at either end of a fallen tree-trunk.

"He has slipped through our fingers, I tell you," the younger man was saying. "Good now, let me sleep awhile. If you hear a sound beside the cry of the owls, you can waken me. But I swear you will hear none."

With these words, and without waiting for a reply, he stretched himself on the ground beside his comrade, pulled his hood over his face to keep out the vivid moonlight, and soon began to snore.

It chanced that the captain's nose was turned away from the path that skirted the clearing. Tip-toeing very softly, Robin and the knight were more than half-way across, when, as ill luck would have it, the dragon's tail caught in a low-swinging bough and made a rending, rustling noise.

In an instant the archer was on his feet, with his long knife bared. He turned round—and then, with a gurgling shriek, he fell upon his knees and hid his face in his hands, while the two weird figures that had so terrified him hurried past and were swallowed up by the bracken on the further side of the clearing. The sleeping archers sat up and rubbed their eyes.

"What ails you, Captain?" asked the less sleepy of the two.

"I am lost forever," groaned their leader. "I am punished for all my misdeeds! I have seen Satan and one of his imps. With mine own eyes I have seen them!"

The archers stared all about them, but Robin and the dragon were round the next bend in the path by now, and not even the far-off glint of a peacock-coloured scale betrayed them.

"You have been dreaming," they told their captain. "There is no one here, neither man nor devil."

"It was no dream," stammered the rascal. "It was Satan himself—seven ells high, he was, and had scales like a sea-monster—and flames came from the head of the imp that walked before him."

"Which way did they go?" asked the bolder of his companions.

"The earth opened and swallowed them up!" moaned the captain, who firmly believed everything that he was saying in his frenzy of fear.

The archers glanced at each other. Perhaps it was not a dream, after all! At any rate, neither of them felt inclined to quit the open space where they were, and explore the mysterious depths of the wood. So Robin and the dragon heard no pursuing footsteps crash through the undergrowth in their wake. Only the owls and the rabbits and the squirrels saw them push their way through the thick thorn hedge on the other side of the wood, and thence out on to the treeless heath above the village of Hylton Parva. When they came to a halt there, they could hear the deep-toned bell in the monastery tower ringing to call the monks to prayer.

"Now," said Sir Lionel, crossing himself as well as he could with his injured right

arm, "now may I thank the Saints for my deliverance!" Hurriedly he divested himself of his borrowed array, and the dragon's robe collapsed in a glittering, clashing heap round his ankles. Robin took hold of it rather ruefully by the tail. He supposed he would have to drag it back to Upton Regis with him, and it was no light burden for a small boy whose legs were already weary.

"Nay," said Sir Lionel, "leave the dragon's pelt where it lies. I will send a monk forth later to fetch it. And I pledge you my honour, as a knight, that the bakers of Upton Regis shall have their dragon again long before next Corpus Christi."

"We shall need him for our Christmas mumming, Sir," hinted Robin timidly.

"You shall not lack him, bold baker! And now," he unhooked the pouch from his girdle as he spoke, "here be twenty good golden pieces. Take them, and this purse with them, lest you drop a dozen by the way. You do not fear to win homeward through the wood alone?"

Robin shook his red mop vigorously. "No, truly. If the archers be awake, I can dodge among the bracken."

"Stoutly spoken!" said

the knight. "Count me your friend, valiant imp—and your friend you shall find me, when I come one day to Upton Regis. Now get you gone. Fear nothing. You will meet no dragons yonder."

Robin opened his mouth, but no words would come. Twenty pieces of gold! Why, Master Cobb thought himself lucky if he had five in his pouch! All Robin could do was to duck his head, as all prentice boys duck their heads to mayors and aldermen, and such great people. Then he swung round and set off sturdily towards the dark belt

of trees that fringed the open heath. Hardly had he gone three paces when he heard Sir Lionel calling him back. Robin retraced his steps in some alarm, and then he saw by the light of the moon that the knight was laughing. "Oh, fie, Robin!" said Sir Lionel. "You had forgotten your fellow Matt! Must the chest be hewn asunder ere they set the bold baker free?"

And so speaking he drew something from his girdle of gilded leather and tossed it towards the dusky-faced imp.

As it fell upon the dew-spangled turf at his feet, Robin saw that it was a great iron key. [THE END.]



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FRIVOLITY.

I heard three voices from the distant trees
Borne on the silvan tinkle of the breeze.

And one was mystery, a thing of grey
Shadows o'er the lighter mood of man,
Weaving ghostly coats of fabled mail
To melt the effervescent joy of Pan.

And one was love, a sweet romantic air
That floated on the wind like thistle-
down,

Soft as a new-born child's caress
It sought my every lingering doubt to
drown.

And one was fay, and full of mockery,
A lilting music throbbing to the tune
Of twinkling steps, the Sun dance of
the leaves
Which play the court songs of Our
Lady June.

And then I heard the clamour of
the town,
And wonderingly I gazed upon the
play
Of rustling breeze on silken hose
and gown,
Yet could not glimpse the contour of
Miss Fay.

Then lo! I caught the voices of a
careless crowd at play,
And knew Mistress Frivolity was
lady of the day.

WILLIAM JEWELL.

A LITTLE LEGEND OF EGYPT.

FROM THE PAINTING BY ARTHUR H. BUCKLAND. EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS, 1926.



The Scarab in the Pharaoh's Ring.

The Beetle Speaks :

I do not know why it should be,
But every blue-winged elf I see
Says, "Come and tell a tale to me!"

Sometimes I frown and steal away ;
Sometimes I listen when they pray,
And tell the only tale I know.

To seek to waken him were vain
Till in the ring that long has lain
Empty that scarab shines again.

Where runs the road to Egypt, elf ?
I cannot find it, though myself
I dwelt in Egypt long ago.

In Egypt once there was a king
Who bore a scarab in his ring—
A glittering green-and-purple thing.

The gods being wroth, his body slept
While from his royal ring there crept
A beetle dusky-hued and slow.



THE ASS'S MOUTH.

By LAURENCE HOUSMAN.



IMPLEMAN'S donkey, pulling a mouthful of hay where he ought not, and never heeding—or else not caring—that a sleeping fairy lay in it, had nearly swallowed her.

"Ow! Ow!" exclaimed the fairy, waking up in a great hurry. She had lost her wand, she was helpless, and could only cry, "Ow! Ow!" as Jonah, perhaps, cried when the whale was swallowing him, not knowing at the time what great things were going to come of it. The donkey paid no more attention than the whale did. He went on chewing—even began swallowing. The fairy had disappeared all but her head, which continued to cry, "Ow! Ow!"

Simpleman, hearing the cry come from the donkey's mouth, naturally thought that the beast himself was making it. Being a simple and a pious soul, he was not so much astonished as you or I might have been at hearing an ass speak. But he ran in haste to the beast's head to find out what was the matter.

"Hark at that, now!" he cried as he ran. "Here we are back in the scriptures again. What in the world's the matter? If it's an angel you're seeing, where is it?"

"Ow! Ow!" cried the little fairy for the last time; and, just as her head was disappearing into the ass's mouth, Simpleman caught sight of it.

"What?" he cried to his beast, in shocked amaze. "An angel, and you're eating her? But you mustn't, or I'll lose my soul, and my luck goes with it!" He caught hold of the beast's mouth, and wrenched it open. Out dropped the fairy.

Her dress was badly torn; she was covered in a mess of chewed hay; and having just been horribly frightened, she remained horribly angry, and—as is then the way with people—inclined to be cruel. Simpleman, still mistaking her for an angel, was very much astonished, both at the sight and the slim, dainty size of her.

"And is that all there is to you, Angel dear?" he cried. "Sure, if they make you as small as that, it's no wonder you fell out like a raindrop when the clouds opened!"

But the fairy was only paying him sideways attention. She was too busy, searching with intent for her wand, to speak to him. So Simpleman, being left to make conversation alone, went on opening his mouth and putting his foot in it.

"And did ever such a thing happen in the world before?" he cried: "a poor dumb beast making a mouthful out of one of his betters down from above! And me hearing you cry, and thinking 'twas the beast himself talking to me! And a flea's chance, if I hadn't come and nicked ye out in the tick of time, but he'd have swallowed you! And if he had, small hope that Heaven would ever have seen *you* again."

[Continued opposite.]



The fairy, so far as words went, still gave him no heed. She was wanting her wand badly—was looking for it, and could not find it. Simpleman, getting no answer to all these expressions of his concern, bethought him of a reason, and straightway put it into words.

"And is it a dumb thing ye are, then, that ye can't speak to me?" he inquired. "Or is it in a foreign language that ye all speak to yourselves up yonder?—which, if it is, will be the reason, maybe, why all my prayers are so seldom answered."

At which remark the fairy suddenly gave up search for the missing wand, and spoke out her mind fiercely.

"A dumb thing, am I?" she cried. "So, when I spoke, it was your own beast that you heard; and I, having stolen hay that did not belong to me, was swallowing him? Ass of a man! for this, from the mouth of your own ass will I reward you, and into his mouth charge it to you again. For henceforth he shall speak with your voice, and *you* shall speak with his; and so shall it be with you till with that state you are content, or till that which I have now lost is found again!"

And so saying, the fairy blew all to pieces and vanished. For that is the way with fairies when, without their wands, they lose their tempers. Just as the poison of a serpent is in its sting, the kick of an ass in its heels, the light of a glow-worm in its tail, so is the power of a fairy in her wand. That little tapering rod, with its sharp, shining point, is the channel and instrument through which her spells and curses find outlet and direction. And just as a church steeple which has no lightning-conductor may get torn down by a thunderbolt, so a fairy in a rage, with no point of weapon for its discharge, may do herself damage, and go all to pieces from sheer internal combustion and pressure to the square inch, as this one did. And when a fairy does that, it takes a long time to repair the damage; for she does not die of it; her combined entity and visibility are badly dislocated, and nothing but a long, low diet of pure living and high thinking can restore to her the self-possession she has thus forfeited.

So it happened to the fairy now—she disappeared entirely; and, with curse and blessing divided between them, Simpleman and his ass set forth to find their fortune.

Presently, as they went on their way, they met a countryman. "Fine day, gaffer," said the countryman.

Simpleman quite agreed. "Hee-haw!" he replied.

The countryman turned and stared amazed; the ass pricked up his ears. "What was that you said, Master?" enquired the ass. "Fine day? I thin': it's going to rain."

"Holy Jonah!" cried the countryman. "Murder and mystery! Here's an ass that has taken a man for his meal and swallowed him!" And full of fright, he gathered up his legs and ran.

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

"As you say, Master," replied the ass, "men are mostly fools; and then they charge it to us. 'Twould be a sad world, indeed, if we were as foolish as they are."

[Continued on Page 45.]

Maeterlinck's Dog: HIS STORY.

PICTURES BY CECIL ALDIN FROM "MY DOG,"
BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK; REPRODUCED BY
COURTESY OF MESSRS. GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN,
LTD., THE PUBLISHERS OF THE VOLUME.

Yes, my name's Pelléas—why, I do not know,
But thus he calls me, hence it must be so.
Why should I wish to question his command
Because, forsooth, I do not understand
The reason of his choice? Enough for me
He names me Pelléas—Pelléas it must be.
Let captious critics other names suggest:
Jean, Henri, Pierre—master's choice is best.
Not mine to puzzle why, when first I came,
He called me Pelléas—such, Sir, is my name.

You like my looks? (Yes, pat me if you will)
I'm glad I please you, yet I do not thrill
With conscious pride at words of gracious praise,
Nor feel embarrassed at your flattering gaze.



A well-bred bulldog values at its worth
Such kindly comments on his noble birth:
Full well he knows that true nobility
Is not a matter of mere pedigree.
Yet am I glad that your approving voice
Renders a tribute to my master's choice.

You are a friend, I'm sure. How do I know?
I cannot tell you, but I feel 'tis so;
A something in your voice—the light that lies
Within your steadfast, sympathetic eyes.
You want my master? Come then, let us see
If we can find him; pray, Sir, follow me.
This is his room. Let's listen! ... Ah, not there!
Open the door, please! That's his special chair,
Which nobody dare ever venture near
When he's away—at least if I am here.

He won't be long; I always know, you see,
When he is going far away from me;
He comes and tells me. Then I do not mind,
Though feeling mournful that I'm left behind.
Yes, it is lonesome and the days are drear,
Nights are unending when he is not near.
Yet in his absence 'tis my joyous pride

[Continued overleaf.]



Continued.]

To guard his household, that no ill betide.
Ah, with what rapture do I fly to greet

Master returning, crouching at his feet.

This world is good—a feast of food and sun,

Of endless wonders, restful sleep and fun;

This world is harsh—a sad, mysterious place

Of things forbidden, unexplained disgrace.

How can poor Pelléas (but a puppy still)

Learn to unravel Humans' good from ill?

Why "this" is lawful, "that" to be deplored—

Why cats insulting must be quite ignored—

Why I may bark, and even teeth disclose,

But must not tackle slinking back-door foes?

A puzzling place—where instinct's misty code

Oft finds me straying from the man-made road,

And acts unselfish, for the common good,

At times are punished—vaguely understood.

I don't complain, but strive from day to day

To grasp the reason of each "mayn't" and "may."

When others chide me for a fault unguessed

I am but little by their wrath distressed;



"Tis only master's dreaded word of blame

That fills my being with despair and shame.

Yes, though I sometimes cannot clearly see

Why he is angry or annoyed with me,
One thing is certain—he in whom I trust

Is ever loving, always, always just.
If I unknowing disobey commands,
I am not punished—master understands,

No less forbearing when through nights of pain

He nursed and brought me back to health again;

And I, ungrateful, spurned his lightest touch,

Yet he forgave me—since he loved so much.

"Tis little wonder that when he is glad

I too am happy, whilst if he looks sad
I sit beside him, nestling 'gainst his knees:

"What is your trouble?—let me help you, please!

I owe you all—there's little I can do,
But—can't your Pelléas bear this burden, too?"

Then he will pat me, and will comprehend:

"You share my sorrows as my joys, true friend."

My name is Pelléas—..... "Tis his voice I hear;
Coming, dear master! Welcome, master dear! —JOE WALKER.



A Famous Christmas Gift-Book Hero.

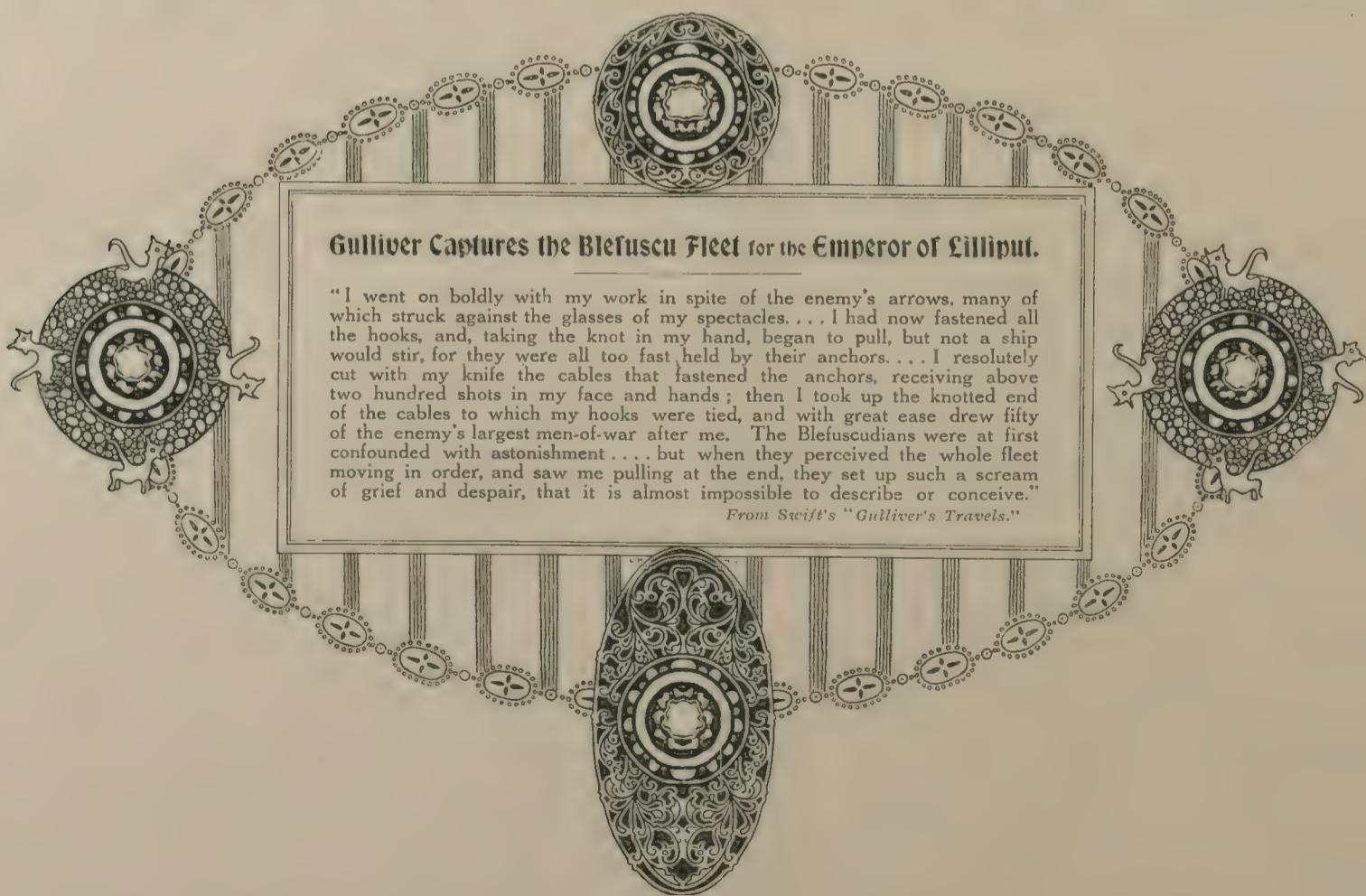
FROM THE PAINTING BY ANDRÉ DEVAMBEZ.



Gulliver Captures the Blefuscian Fleet for the Emperor of Lilliput.

"I went on boldly with my work in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles.... I had now fastened all the hooks, and, taking the knot in my hand, began to pull, but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors.... I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving above two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me. The Blefuscians were at first confounded with astonishment.... but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair, that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive."

From Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."



“Knowing ‘Bird’s’ —aren’t we?





Christmas-time is a time of Goodwill & Good Spirits —
Dewar's

"THE ASS'S MOUTH."—(Continued from Page 39.)

"This ass of mine," thought Simpleman, "has wisdom, and I never knew it. For not only is he more weatherwise, but he reads the minds of men better than I do. I shall do well, henceforth, to make him my leader. Who knows? He may bring me to fortune."

Presently, sure enough, it began to rain. Simpleman drew up at the first inn he came to. Having discovered his own



He put his hand into the ass's mouth . . . it gave out light.

limitations of speech, he left his ass to do the talking. The ass put his head into the bar, where the landlord and others were drinking. "Food for two and a stable for one!" said the ass. "My master likes beer, but I like water."

Before he had done speaking the bar was cleared of its occupants; the inner door was slammed, locked, and bolted. Inside Simpleman could hear the landlord and his three customers saying their prayers together.

"Go in, Master, and help yourself!" said the ass.

Simpleman did so. The ass waited. Simpleman came out having drunk more than was good for him. He was not accustomed to getting free beer, so had not yet learned the "way out" of it. The ass, patiently waiting his turn, said: "Take me to the well, Master; I'm thirsty." And his master, with all goodwill, but rather haltingly, being uncertain of his feet, took him, and, as he let down the bucket, tumbled in after it.

"There!" said the ass, "if you had drunk water instead of beer, you wouldn't be in the water now; the water would have been in you."

"Hee-haw!" replied Simpleman, meaning many things, but having only that to say.

Meanwhile the innkeeper and his customers, looking out from a well-barred window, had seen what had happened. And Simpleman being safely bottled up in the well, clinging with both hands to the bucket-rope, they ran off to tell the authorities of the portent that had come into their midst.

So presently came the Magistrate, the Vicar and his two Curates, the Coroner, the Sanitary Inspector, and the Village Policeman; and they hauled up Simpleman by rope and bucket out of the well, and, putting him to drain, they all gathered round, and began questioning him.

The Magistrate said, "What is your name?"

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The Vicar said, "Are you a respectable married man?"

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The Curates said, "Are you Church or Chapel? And have you been confirmed?"

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The Sanitary Inspector said, "Have you been vaccinated?"

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The Coroner said, "He seems to be still alive."

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The Village Policeman said, "I charge you with being drunk and incapable and a danger to the public peace."

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

The ass said, "Master, you have answered them like a wise man." And no sooner had the ass spoken, than the Magistrate, the Vicar and his two Curates, the Coroner, and the Sanitary Inspector, all took to their heels and ran; for the shock of hearing an ass speak with a human voice was so great that it pierced them like a two-edged sword to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow of their bones, and the remnants of their intelligence. And the innkeeper and his customers, caught in the common panic, made haste to go after them.

Only the Village Policeman, that palladium of law, order, constitution, and liberty, stood his ground as though it were holy, and continued to do his duty for King and Country, as policemen always do.

"Come, come!" he said "get a move on! We can't have no more of this here play-acting. If you don't shift back into your right skins again, you'll be charged for being suspected characters."

"Hee-haw!" said Simpleman. The ass said, "Come and have a drink!"

Then did wonder take place. For, see and behold! the Village Policeman, whose mind, impervious to epigram or earthquake, had withstood the shock of hearing an ass speak with a human voice, and a human with the voice of an ass—though that is not so rare, or so terrifying—could not withstand the offer of a drink while on duty, with authority safely out of the way.

Casting an eye of pity on the swiftly retiring backs of the Church, the State, the Medical Profession, and "the Trade,"



Suddenly the ass brayed. Contentment went out of him.

he drew the rough of his hand across his mouth as one draws a plough across a thirsty land, and with suitable detachment of expression replied, "Well, I don't mind if I do."

"Spoken like a wise man!" said the ass; and Simpleman, leading the way to the abandoned bar, had presently inducted the Village Policeman into the mysteries of free beer so deeply and well that there was no getting him out again. So, leaving

[Continued on page 48.]

London Deer and Their Christmas Dinner.

FROM THE DRAWING BY GILBERT HOLIDAY.



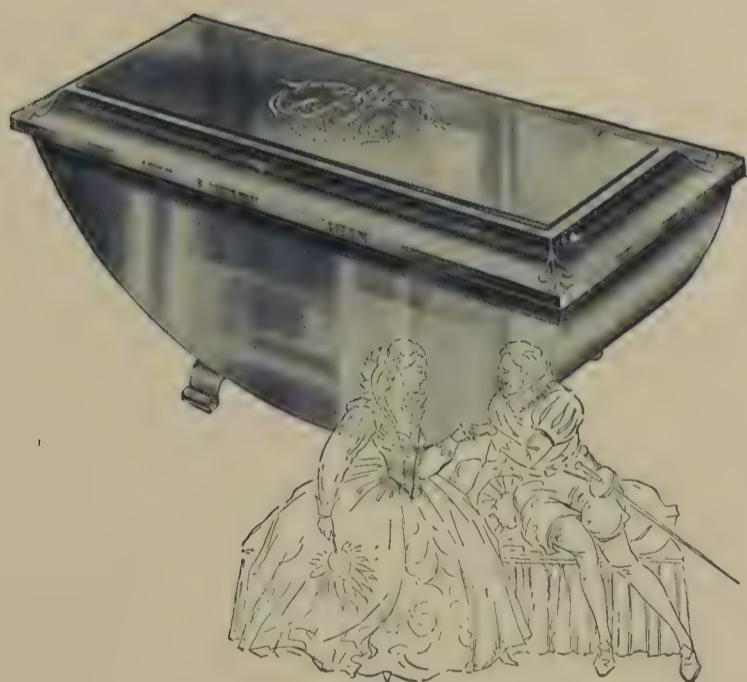
A CHRISTMAS DINNER QUEUE IN BUSHEY PARK:
THE DEER IN SINGLE FILE.

G.H.

During hard weather, when the ground is covered with snow, food for the deer in Bushey Park is sent out in a cart, and the animals become quite accustomed to looking out for it and following it. The remarkable thing about them is that they do not crowd round the cart, but come up in single file, headed by the "monarch of the herd," and receive their food in turn, for all the world like a "ration party" of soldiers.

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LONDON.

Made by hand, one at a time,



of the unique 555 leaf.

"THE ASS'S MOUTH."—(Continued from Page 45.)

him as a pledge of their honesty and goodwill, Simpleman and the ass set out once more into the world to find their fortune.

They had not gone far before, in a meadow, they saw a school-treat hard at work enjoying itself with see-saws and swings and skipping-ropes; and, piled on a large table hard by, expectant buns getting ready to be eaten, and buttered bread, and seedy-cake, and mugs of pale tea, with teachers rapturously attending on them.

"Master, what's over there?" inquired the ass. "It looks a merry sort of world, that does. Shall we go, and be in it?"

"Hee-haw," replied Simpleman, meaning "yes."

So into the gate they went, and were met straightway by a person of superintending aspect, with a forbidding countenance, who said, "What is your business here?"

"Only to enjoy ourselves," said the ass; while "Hee-haw!" said Simpleman.

They had come close to the preparing table, and had said their say loud and plain; and the next moment they had a remarkably fine view of the entire teaching staff of a well-informed Sunday School making for the nearest gap in the hedge, with shrill screams of confusion and alarm.

The children, thinking this to be the beginning of a new game, or possibly the sudden discovery of a shortage of milk (for in the next field were cows), flocked across to observe and to admire; and so, coming on Simpleman and his ass, they heard the ass speaking with a human voice, saying things that could be clearly heard and understood—and his master, as one born to it, answering him in the language of an ass.

Instantly, without a qualm or a doubt, without a ruffle or a hitch, through the open minds of young children so easily capable of receiving it, the Kingdom of Heaven descended upon earth.

What the ass said did not matter; he had but to open his mouth and speak, and Eden was come again. To hear an ass talking like a man was the greatest and wisest and most beautiful thing that had ever happened to them in all their born days. The world had a new meaning for them, as—by the mouth of one beast—all that had ever been told them of magic and mystery came true to their ears.

They danced, they shouted, they sang; they rolled in the grass for ecstasy; they snatched the buns and the cake from the tables, and ate them without order or decency or limitation, leaving the bread and butter untouched; they poured out libations of pale tea from their mugs to this founder of their new faith in all the stories they had been told. The one proof sufficed for all the rest. An ass had but to talk, and

into their rainbow minds came promise of a perfect world. Ay, truly it is to the children we must look for a solution of the sad case in which the world now finds itself!

Suddenly, from the neighbouring field—the field where the cows were—came the fierce, sharp, shattering blast of the superintendent's whistle. It came upon the children like a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow of their bones, and the rudiments of their intelligence. Discipline smote them into line; discipline, convention, and unbelief withdrew them from the magic circle of the opening of an ass's mouth. They became alive to the world once more, and dead to Heaven; they turned and they marched away through the hedge into the damp dim distance, to be herded with the teaching staff and the cows.

"Master," said the ass, "all this talking has been bad for me. It's hurting my mouth; I feel a pain and a swelling; there's something there that I don't like. It feels like a thorn, and a large one. See what it is, and pull it out for me!"

Simpleman did as the ass asked him. And there, sure enough, in the ass's mouth he found a swelling, and in the centre of it something sticking out. Poor Simpleman!

Life was contenting him now; he hadn't a regret or a grief. To hear his ass talk with a human voice pleased him; to speak himself with an ass's tongue was sufficient for his need—it saved thought and trouble. He wanted no change back to the condition he had come from. With a talking ass for companion, it was clear now that he would never lack for entertainment or adventure. The fairy's curse on him had turned to a blessing. Yes; he was content.

He put his hand into the ass's mouth, and drew out the thorn. Truly it was a large one—bright, straight, tapering, and shining, it gave out a light. He did not throw it away; it would make a good toothpick, he thought. Sticking it into the rim of his coat, "I wonder," he thought to himself, "if that is the thing the angel had lost and was looking for, about which she said that till it was found again—"

Suddenly the ass brayed. Simpleman looked up astonished. The unwished-for change had come—how, or why, he did not quite know. As he found voice to speak, contentment went out of him; resignation took its place.

"Eh, it's a sad world!" said Simpleman, and, taking up a piece of the bread and butter which the children had left, he went on his way eating it.

"I think it's going to rain," he said presently.

"Hee-haw!" said the ass.

[THE END.]

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DISTINGUISHED in design and appearance and economical—"LUVICCA" SHIRTS, PYJAMAS and SOFT COLLARS will stand any amount of wear and laundering without losing in quality one bit.
LOOK FOR THE REGISTERED "LUVICCA" TAB ON EVERY GARMENT, NONE GENUINE WITHOUT.
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ARE MOST PRACTICAL AND
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AT THE CHILDREN'S PARTY.
I say, old man, will you please tell these ladies and gentlemen that these are very old boots done with
CHERRY BLOSSOM BOOT POLISH.

"Why?"
Because they will think that I am always having new boots, they don't know how stingy you are. A bob a week dress allowance ain't much to go round attending Parties with you. That's right, shake me and scratch the chair with your clumsy feet—it doesn't matter, for I saw a tin of

MANSION POLISH
downstairs—jolly good stuff it is, too."
The Chiswick Polish Co., Ltd., Chiswick, W.4.

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Good Night!

Delicious

"**OVALTINE™**"

Brings perfect rest

The Yellow Frock

BY
ELISABETH KYLE

Her arms were full of flowers, and the car was getting under way, but one of the men on the platform swung her up beside him.



BECAUSE the store of francs in her purse was rapidly dwindling, Minnie Luck turned up a side street and entered a cheaper quarter of the town to purchase the materials for supper. Her parents were coming from England that day—Adam Luck, the gentle, mouse-like clerk who out of a scanty salary had managed to squeeze two years' fees at the Brussels Conservatoire for Minnie, and his wife Marion.

Both had written excited, nervous letters about the great event, and Marion especially seemed afraid of the crossing. They supposed that things were done very differently over there; but one lives and learns, and, above all, one must do in Rome as Rome does. Minnie grinned slightly as she looked down at her silk-stockinged feet and shoes of coloured leather with their swinging silver tassels at the sides. She had not been home for a year, and she had bought a lot of clothes since then. What would her mother think of silk stockings worn at ten o'clock in the morning?

The cobble stones of the Grand' Place gleamed white in the



sun, save where here and there deep patches of shadow lay under the flower-sellers' striped umbrellas. Minnie's heels clicked sharply as she ran from one oasis to another, buying a dozen deep red roses and a bunch of mignonette, and a little pot with a queer red flower which would just do for the centre of the table. Then she plunged into a side street and arrived at the bottom of the Rue Montaigne de la Cour.

The terraced garden glowed like an emerald set in a wilderness of brick. From the mouths of two crouching bronze leopards there gushed a stream of water that fell in cataracts at Minnie's feet. She began to climb the steps slowly, till she reached the top of the gardens, and then she sat down on a seat by the balustrade, overlooking the Old Town with its huddled roofs, and the slender spire of the Hôtel-de-Ville soaring up from amongst them like a minaret.

A few moments she sat with folded hands. Presently drawing out a crumpled letter, she began to read the last page.

"Your father and I think it a splendid chance. Fancy ! sixty pounds a year, and Miss Melling's pupils are all ladies.

[Continued overleaf.]

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Now 1/6 only

WHITE

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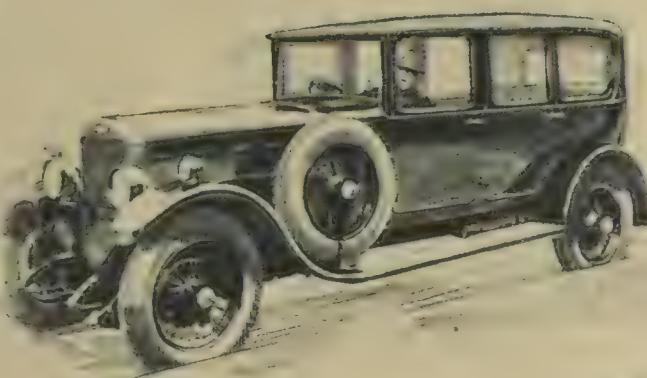
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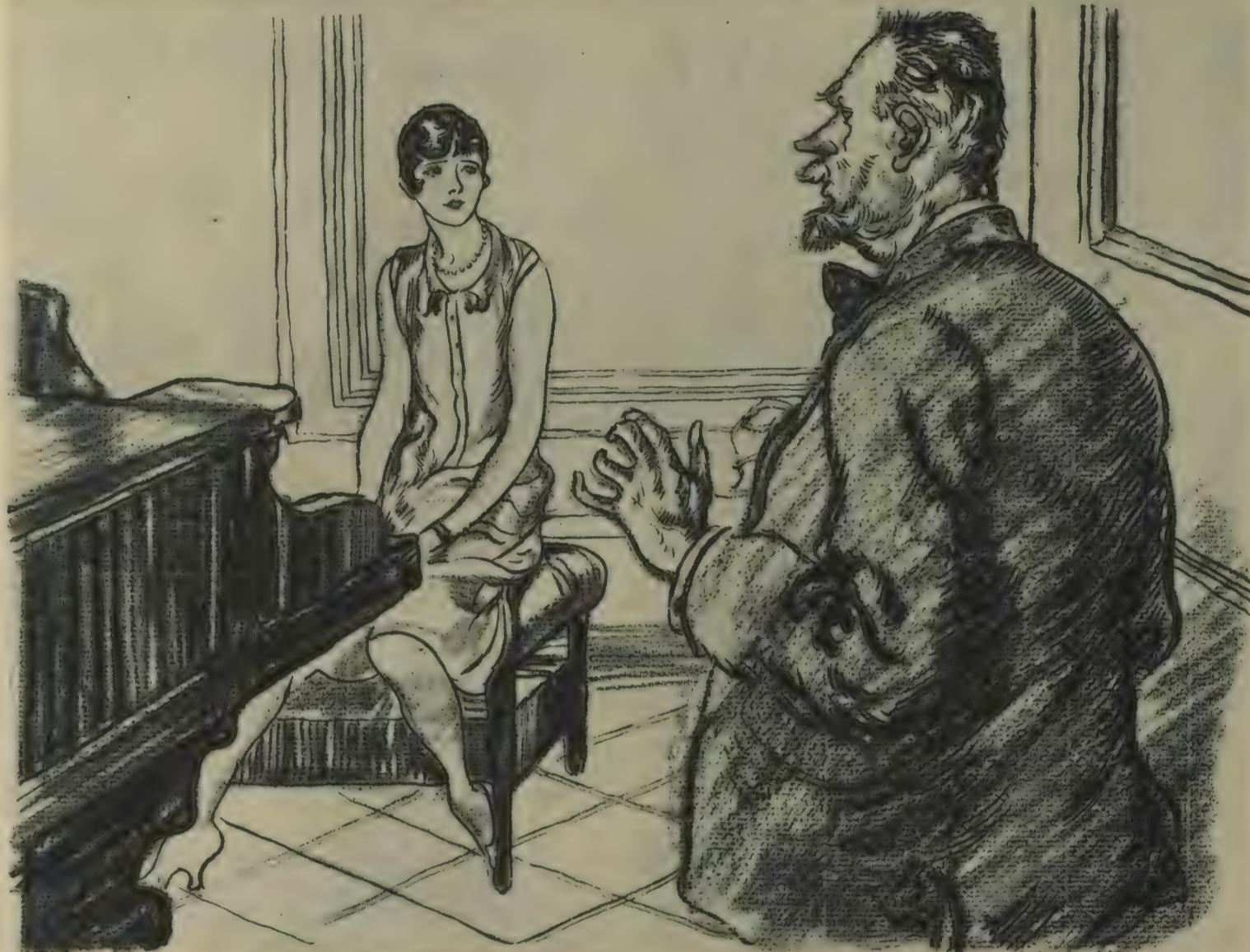
Sir Josiah Marsh's daughter is going there next term, so I suppose you will teach her. Not that the Marshes are anyone special. We all know how Sir Josiah got his title. But they have money, and might invite you out to their place. . . ."

Her face quivered, and then her eyes grew hard. "They actually seem to think I would *like* it," she thought bitterly. "To be walled up in a country town with no musical life whatever. If they meant that, why did they send me here?"

She started up, and walked quickly out of the gardens and across the Place Royale. The tram she wanted was already at the stopping-place, and she ran towards it. Her arms were full of flowers, so that she could not grasp the rail, and the car was getting under way; but one of the men on the platform bent down and swung her up beside him.

which lay across the bed, the contents of a work-box strewn beside it.

Minnie went over to the bed and looked down at her frock. It was the one she was going to wear to-morrow at the *Concours*, when she would play to the judges, the Brussels audience, and—Theo Razimov. As she remembered that the famous pianist was to be there, the faint half-hope which she was cherishing sprang into a wild resolve. To play as she had never played before, to let the music consume her like a flame, and, glowing through her, reach out to him, persuading him better than her tongue could to let her become his pupil. All the world knew that Razimov would not stir his little finger in the direction of a struggling musician unless that musician had genius. And if she could perform the miracle of challenging



She turned round and saw M. Matthys, one of the professors, standing looking into the room.

"That was a dangerous thing to attempt, Mademoiselle Luck," he said.

She looked at him, panting, and saw that it was Jan Verrist, and, as usual, the sight of his heavy Flemish face and great ox-eyes irritated her. "What nonsense!" she cried. "You're always fussing about me. Why can't you leave me alone?"

Verrist flushed; then he spoke, slowly, doggedly. "I cannot leave you alone," he said, "because I love you."

There could be no possible mistake as to his words. They had been so terribly distinct. Everyone on the platform heard them. One or two of the men gasped, then threw sidelong glances at each other. An old woman drew away from them, shocked, and gazed ostentatiously out of the window.

Minnie stared, her face whitening; and then, putting up her hands as a screen, wished she could die. "Oh!" she cried. "Oh! . . ."

The tram came to a standstill, and she jumped out and darted among the crowd, striving to hide herself from the curious gaze of the conductor, who leaned out watching her. She entered another tram, which crept snail-like along the boulevard, and stopped for her at the bottom of a small street opening off. A few minutes later she was dazedly climbing the stairs of the *pension*, to her room on the top flat. She put her parcels down on the table. The paper round the flower-pot was torn, and the queer red flower thrust its face through the opening. The only other patch of colour was a yellow frock of silk and chiffon

his interest, surely then there would be no more said about Miss Melling's school.

And then she remembered Jan Verrist, and clenched her hands till the knuckles sprang out white upon them. How dared he! *How dared he!*

Of course it was his Flemish dullness which made him inconsiderate of the humiliation his words would bring. How could a man with such coarse feelings ever begin to be a musician? Minnie marvelled for the hundredth time why Jan Verrist had ever broken loose from his father's farm (he had once told her that his father was a farmer), and had studied the piano for three years in Brussels. He was even going to play at the *Concours* to-morrow, along with those star pupils who had learned all that the Conservatoire could teach, and who counted on their performances procuring engagements, or, if they intended to study further, of attracting the attention of a master such as Razimov.

She took off her hat and threw it down on the table beside the pot of flowers. She picked up her frock (the yellow frock, the one she was making to wear at the *Concours*. It was not quite finished yet), and drew the chiffon idly through her fingers. Then suddenly she remembered. It was as one remembers a precious piece of news which for a few minutes had got crowded out of one's mind. So Minnie reached out an arm and drew the white oblong shoe-box out from among the other packages she had brought in. It bore on its lid the name of the best

[Continued on Page 52]



Registered Trade Mark
THE ORIGINAL HAIG BOTTLE

IMITATIONS of the original "HAIG" bottle are being used by other people in order to sell their goods.

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To match her prettiest frock



Some of the centres:

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An orange creme cup with a soft creme filling made from fresh oranges.

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A delicious nougat made with white of eggs, pure honey, sliced Valencia almonds and finest sugar.

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Whole preserved cherry surrounded by cherry creme and covered with finest chocolate.

Strawberry Creme Cup.

A delicate strawberry creme cup with vanilla creme filling.

Truffles.

A rich chocolate pate covered in plain chocolate and rolled in milk chocolate crumbs.

The striking motif of the Marlborough Box was originated by Parisian designers and will make an immediate appeal to all who appreciate the charm of their creations.

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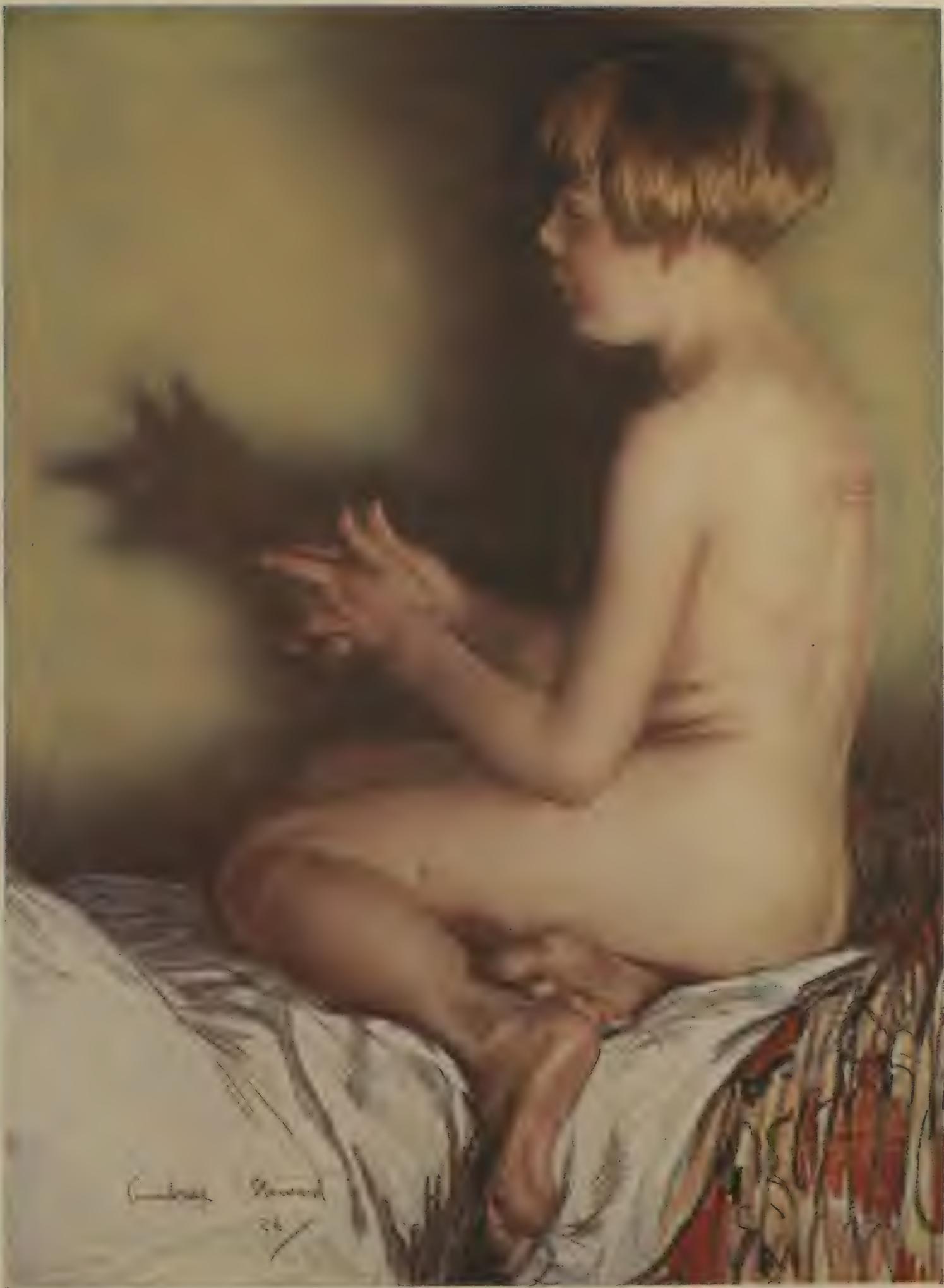
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BOVRIL



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Continued from Page 52.]

shoe-shop in Brussels. In a moment the lid was wrenched off, disclosing a pair of tiny silver shoes, exquisitely worked.

Minnie slipped them on, then off again, holding them out at arm's length, glorying in them. Afterwards she laid them reverently beside the yellow frock. They had cost nearly a third of her whole month's allowance for food, laundry, everything. Which was why she had made the frock herself, and would have to scrimp and save for the remainder of this month and the next. Not that Dad wouldn't have given her extra if she had asked, but how was she to tell him the awful price of the shoes?—even supposing he could be brought to believe that anyone dared demand such a price for such tiny, butterfly things.

She must put the finishing touches to her frock now, if she was to have any time for practising before her parents' train arrived. She filled a needle with yellow silk and began to sew busily. In a few minutes her thoughts had left the silver slippers for Jan Verrist. What was he going to play? Something heavy and German, probably. His broad peasant's hands suggested that. Perhaps even Mendelssohn. Verrist's common mind would revel in the worn clichés. . . . Funny that she had never heard him play. All the fault of that ridiculous rule by which the Brussels Conservatoire forbids pupils of different masters to listen to each other's lessons.

The last stitch was taken, and Minnie folded up the frock and put it in a drawer with the silver shoes. She jammed on her hat again, and started for the Conservatoire. Most of the practising rooms were empty. She entered one, pulled off her gloves, and opened the piano. Then the notes of the work which all the students had to play began to sound through the room. It was a sonata, cold, well balanced, classical; needing a clear mind and supple fingers. It did not inspire her, but her quickly-moving brain threaded all its mazes of cross-rhythms easily, and her marvellous technique made the thing sound brilliant. When she had reached the end she sat a moment, her hands folded on her lap. Then she raised them and began to play her *morceau choisi*, Jongen's "Le Soleil à Midi."

The sun seemed to shine more warmly into the room as she played, and the dancing motes looked as if they were trying to keep time. This was the kind of music Minnie loved. She played the difficult thing with no effort at all, to such hard practice had her fingers been put. As she leaned back, her eyes half-closed, she thought she saw a lily-pond set in a breathless landscape, and the sun overhead beat fiercely into the pool until all life save her own had fled from the spot. But her soul in the form of a dragon-fly quivered over the surface, drawing nearer and nearer to where in the centre glowed the reflected ball of the sun.

The dream was shattered by the opening of a door. She turned round, her hands still on the keys, and saw M. Matthys, one of the professors, standing looking into the room. "Forgive me, Mademoiselle," he said, bowing apologetically, "but one of my own pupils is doing that to-morrow for his *morceau choisi*. And coming along the passage, it struck

me as interesting to compare the two renderings so different—"

Minnie frowned. "You say someone else is playing it to-morrow?"

"Yes. But that will not affect your rendering. As I said, the two are entirely different. . . . My pupil knows the technique of the thing perfectly, but he does not understand it. It puzzles him. One can hear that in his playing."

"Who is to play it?"

"Young Verrist."

A little sigh of thankfulness came from Minnie's lips. He would gambol through it like a cart-horse, and her own delicate playing be thrown into relief thereby. Suddenly she laid her arms across the piano, the dark wood showing up the clear-cut whiteness of them. Turning towards M. Matthys, she smiled at him as she smiled at her father when she wanted something badly. Her voice was very soft as she asked: "Tell me, is Verrist an artist, or—is he wasting his time?"

The Professor hesitated—succumbed. "He does not altogether waste his time, Mademoiselle, since he has fitted himself very well to teach—"

"Eh bien," Minnie interrupted, "you know I did not mean that—"

"But as an artist"—Matthys paused, stroking his beard—"look you, it is as if each one holds his love of music like a lump of clay between his hands, fashioning it by his temperament, by his share of the divine spark, into the most beautiful thing he knows. Some with no temperament, no vision, are content by mere technique to smooth and round their lump into a nice ball and to roll it easily into a well-paid billet—"

Minnie's hands contracted on the piano-lid. Was not that what her parents wanted of her? "But what about the people who have made something out of their lump. Have—have I, do you think?"

"As I listened to you, I saw a many-coloured bird dart and quiver with the sunlight on its wings. A bird that will never fly very

far, but be content to be beautiful to look at."

"And Verrist?"

"There you have a thing of the most extraordinary. For Verrist, after polishing and rounding his lump, has made of it not even a ball. He stands with the thing between his hands, waiting, considering. He may make something wonderful, or he may drop it at his feet and let it roll into a well-paid post. But if some strong emotion should come to him, I think it will be the something wonderful. He is that type."

For a little she sat silent. Then suddenly she slammed down the piano-lid and pulled her hat down over her ears. "I'm going home, now," she said, "I don't want to make myself stale for to-morrow."

She had just time before going to the station to tidy round her little bed-sitting room at the *pension*, and group the supper-dishes about the red flower in the middle of the table. For it was arranged that they should have their first meal together up there.

At the station a gesticulating mass of humanity poured [Continued overleaf.]



It was a wicked piece of caricature, the slouch, the wooden hands and arms, a triumph of awkwardness. All the colour left Verrist's face.

[Continue]

itself out of the boat-train, tired and dirty with its journey; fragments becoming detached and clustering round the porters like a swarm around the queen-bee. Minnie saw her parents almost at once. They had stayed in the train, fearful of being swirled away by the crowd. Their anxious faces peered out at her from the window of a second-class carriage.

She flung herself at them, feeling a sudden rush of gladness at the sight of these pieces of England; and yet a sense of chill lay underneath the gladness, for in a flash she realised how the lines of her life ran at right angles to theirs. Had she never gone abroad, things might have been different, but it was too late now to attempt to make them lie parallel.

They pushed their way towards the station mouth, excited, with arms full of luggage. There they entered a taxi, and drove down the wide streets, Minnie answering her mother's questions. Could they go to a theatre or something after supper, if father wasn't too tired? And was Minnie sure her new frock was smart enough for the concert? Things not cut out by a really good dressmaker were apt to look home-made-like. Her father never spoke, but turned his head this way and that like a bird, watching the traffic, the gendarmes resplendent on point duty, the women mincing down the chestnut-shaded boulevards.

When they reached the *pension* Minnie ran up to her room and lit the gas under the old copper kettle she had bought in Bruges. It was a quaint party that had supper there that night. Minnie, in the sleeveless woollen frock she had worn all winter, for the comfort of it, but which to her mother's startled eyes presented a distinct incongruity between material and cut. Woollens, she ruminated, belong to the mornings, sleevelessness to evening. This was a frock which melted morning into evening. Minnie, while she talked and laughed, was conscious of the criticism; amusedly conscious, too, of her father's shame-faced glancing towards the unframed sketches on the wall—charcoal studies, mostly, to which she had helped herself from the portfolio of a friend at the Art School.

They went to the opera after supper. It was "La Bohème," and Marguerite Loyer was singing. But the Victorian moustaches and pantaloons of the men, together with the "Frenchiness"

of their attitudes, overcame Mrs. Luck completely. Her fat face crimsoned, till she had to raise her copy of *L'Eventail* to screen herself, while a burst of unseemly mirth issued from behind it, covered, fortunately, by the clapping as the curtain dropped.

"I'm sorry, Minnie," she gasped, after the lights went up; "but the man with the hand on his heart's the very image of my grandfather as a young man. Not that I ever saw him, but your Auntie Loue has an old glass-photo with him wearing a velvet jacket just like that, and checked peg-top trousers, too. Only his hands were in his pockets."

The streets were white and empty when they emerged, and everyone drifted like moths towards the bright lights of the cafés. They ordered grenadines, and sat out on the pavement, though it was cold, because of the novelty. Adam Luck sat with his back to the café, watching a big, fair man who had slouched into the next seat, and sat, his elbows on the little table in front of him, gazing at Minnie.

At first he put the man down as one of those street loafers who, he had read, infested every foreign city, and, flaring angrily, he leaned forward, trying to put himself between his daughter and the other's gaze. Then he saw the man's eyes were wistful, like a dog's, and that, though he watched closely each movement of the girl opposite, it was only with a dumb seeking for recognition.

"Minnie," said her father sharply, "who's the fellow at the next table? He seems to know you."

Minnie's smooth black head still bent over the scarlet grenadine. She swept her eyelashes upwards quickly, then lowered them again. "It's one of the students from the Conservatoire, a man called Verrist. He should be practising instead of wasting time."

"That remark cuts two ways, doesn't it?" Luck said, as they rose to go. Mrs. Luck looked bewildered. Minnie did not deign to answer. She passed Verrist, who looked doggedly the other way. She had cut him a moment before, and he was taking no risks. But Adam Luck saw as they passed the hurt quivering of the young face, and he sighed, wondering.

[Continued overleaf.]

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[Continued.]

Next morning Minnie burst into her mother's room with her hat on. "Hurry up, mum," she cried, "Don't you want to see the shops? Remember you'll be sitting in a stuffy hall all afternoon."

"But your packing, dearie?"

"My—packing?"

"Yes. You're coming home with us to-morrow, aren't you? Miss Melling's school opens next week."

The girl felt as though a squirt of cold water was poured down her neck. She had completely forgotten Miss Melling. Would it be better to tell her mother now that she hoped to be taken as a pupil of Razimov, and thus entirely spoil her mother's first and last day in Brussels? She decided to say nothing till after the *Concours*.

"Oh," she answered quickly, "but I can pack this evening. There's plenty of time."

At two o'clock she was driving swiftly towards the Conservatoire, wearing the yellow frock and silver slippers. Her mother, resplendent in black satin, with many rings, sat beside her. Her father, silent as usual, grasped her music-case as if determined to bear it safely to the hall or perish. They pushed their way in with the crowd, and got seats close to the Director's box. Then Minnie left them, to wait in a side room along with the others who were going to play.

A feverish excitement had taken hold of her. Her hands would not stay steady, and she felt as though her cheeks were burning. The others were calm for the most part, for they were finished products of the Conservatoire and sure of engagements for the coming winter. They stood about in knots, talking and laughing, all except one boy standing by himself at the window, who was not up to the standard, and knew it. But he could not afford to study further, and he must have his degree. And he was green and sick with fear, for they had told him that Razimov had arrived.

Minnie had often laughed at his long hair and black cotton gloves. Now she felt suddenly sorry for him, and crossing the room put her hand on his shoulder.

"What are you afraid of?" she asked. "The fat old

Director? Look!" She dropped into a chair drawn up in front of the fire, and, puffing out her cheeks, frowned severely, twisting a lock of her hair round and round one finger. M. le Directeur was almost completely bald, save for one little lock which he invariably toyed with while considering what marks to give. The students tittered, and even the boy at the window smiled wanly.

"But—Razimov?" he said, and stopped smiling.

"Razimov? Well, he never listens. He sharpens pencils all the time. Like this." She pulled the corners of her mouth down into a bored scowl, and proceeded to make an imaginary point upon an imaginary piece of lead. "And this is you!" She trailed across to the window and leaned up against the frame dejectedly.

The students tittered louder, and the titter became a roar as Minnie, excited, her head held high, saw a tall figure slouch into the room.

"Et, alors, Messieurs, I present to you M. Paul Verrist making his bow to the Director!"

It was a wicked piece of caricature, the slouch, the wooden hands and arms, and finally the bow—a triumph of awkwardness. All the colour left Verrist's face, making it curiously white and strained. He stood speechless, looking at Minnie, and Minnie felt suddenly afraid. A strange little silence had fallen over the room. Everyone seemed conscious of the current of emotion running between these two.

M. Matthys stood in the doorway

"M. Verrist!" he said, and, after the man called had gone—"Silence, while M. Verrist is playing!"

From the next room came the muffled notes of "Le Soleil à Midi." Minnie scarcely heard them at first, but they beat insistently upon her ear till she was forced to listen. There was a strange quality in the music that she had never realised before. It reached towards her, swamped her, beat down on her like the fierce sun at mid-day. There seemed no shade anywhere for her to creep to. Everyone else was listening as well. That was it. She might have disregarded him had not such an intense atmosphere of *listening* spread over the whole building.

[Continued overleaf.]

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[Continued.]

A man near the door stole out softly and looked into the hall. When he returned—"Razimov's in the Director's box," he whispered, "and he's not sharpening pencils. He's listening!"

After that she scarcely heard the others who went on to play. When her own time came she played mechanically, as in a dream, and her version of Jongen's music sounded like the worn tinkling of a musical box. Several of the audience moved restlessly in their seats. They had been sitting still for nearly three hours now, and, anyway, they did not want to hear the same piece twice. Razimov, picking up his pencil, began to trim the point with meticulous care. . . .

Minnie had failed, and she knew it. There was only one thing to be thankful for. Her parents, neither of them musical, had noticed no difference in the two renderings, and were pathetically proud of her finish and technique.

"You looked lovely, dear, just like a yellow daffodil," her mother whispered, but Minnie was looking past her towards the place where she had caught a glimpse of Razimov with his hand on Verrist's shoulder.

"What about going into a café to celebrate?" suggested her father, and they moved across the road together, Minnie walking slowly as though desperately tired. She was very silent as she sipped her coffee, and the father and mother put it down to nervous exhaustion after the strain of playing. But all the time her mind's eye was seeing, in a sort of cycle, Verrist the favoured pupil of Razimov; Verrist taking Paris by storm; Verrist famous. . . .

"It seems that he stands with the thing between his hands, waiting—considering. He may make of it something wonderful, or he may drop it at his feet and let it roll into a well-paid post. But if some strong emotion came to him, it will be the something wonderful. He is that kind. . . ."

At length an idea groped through the confusion of her thoughts. Verrist had told her that he loved her. Better to travel over the world the wife of a great man than to go home to teach at Miss Melling's. But would he have her now? She had ridiculed him; showed him that she despised him.

Another thing. Some strong emotion had awakened him. *Was it love or hate?*

She could only go to him, humble herself, and find out. She rose wearily and said to her mother: "I forgot something. You can find your way home, can't you?" and went out.

She took a tram to the district in which he lived, and as she walked up the long street she tried dazedly to plan what to do—what to say. Should she tell him she had loved him all the time, and that pride had made her act that way. Should she still mock him, tease him, giving way only by degrees? Or should she say nothing at all, but hold out her hands, trusting him to forgive, to understand. Suppose he hated her. Would he throw her out into the street?

She reached the house at last, and rang. The door was opened by a student who boarded with Verrist. He said nothing, but looked at her curiously.

"Is Paul in?" she asked, putting her hand against the door-post to steady herself.

"No," said the other, still staring.

"Oh, I suppose he is with Razimov. Did—did Razimov offer to take him as his pupil?"

"Yes."

"Could you tell me where they are?"

"Verrist did not accept the offer. He got a telegram this afternoon saying that his father was dead, and he has gone home to settle the family's affairs and take charge of the farm for his mother. So that is the end of his career. He left ten minutes ago for the Gare Leopold." The student gave her one more contemptuous look and shut the door.

An hour later Minnie dragged herself up the stairs of the pension. There was a light under her parents' door, but she did not go in. Instead she climbed on till she reached her own room, and, entering it, dragged an empty trunk into the middle of the floor. She threw it open, lifting out the tray, and then she began to pack, moving wearily between her chest of drawers and the trunk. When it was full, she paused for a moment. At last, slipping off the yellow frock, she folded it in layers of tissue paper, and laid it in the tray.

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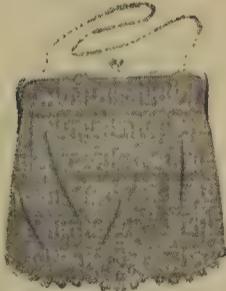
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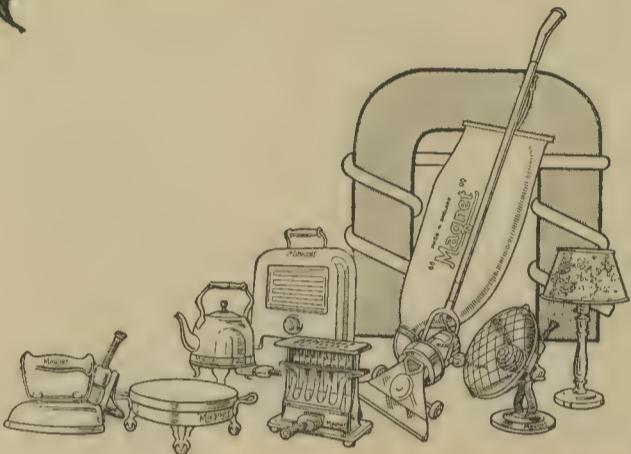
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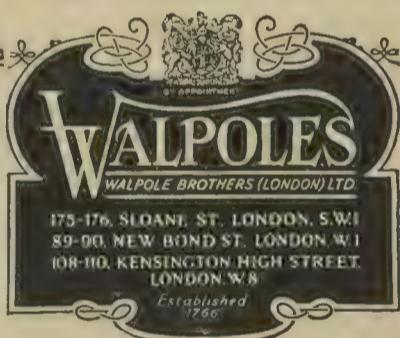
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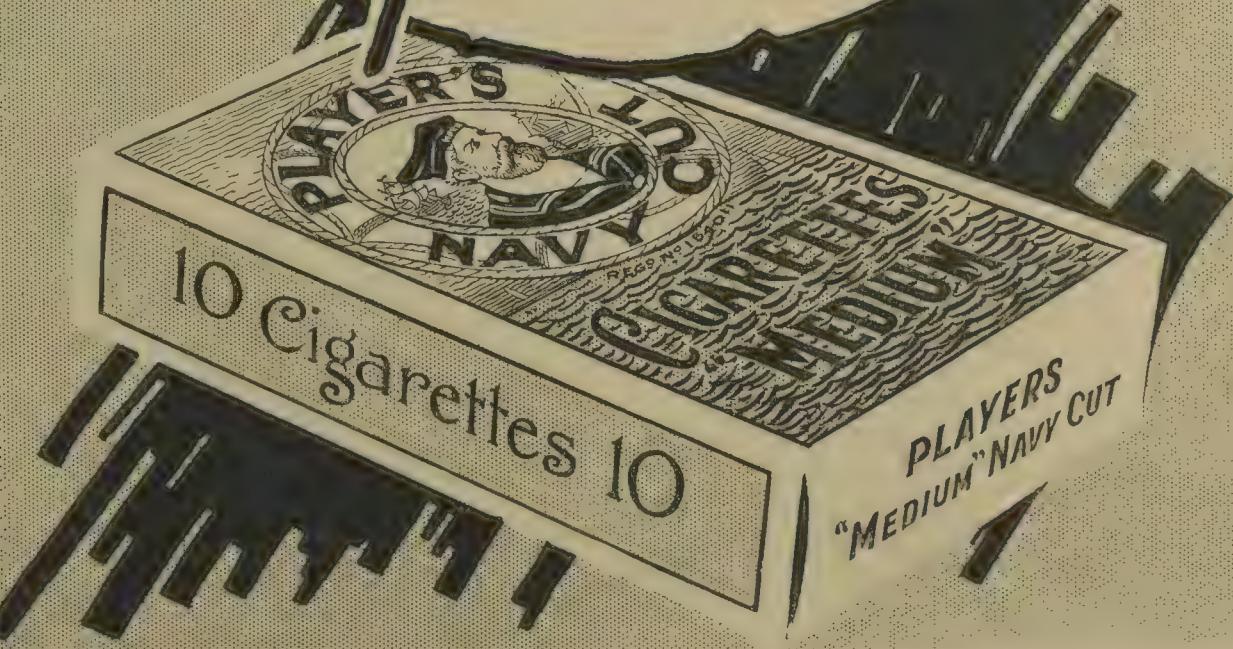
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SAY—

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Please!



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"Ardente-Acoustique" collects and conveys sound

TRUE-TO-TONE

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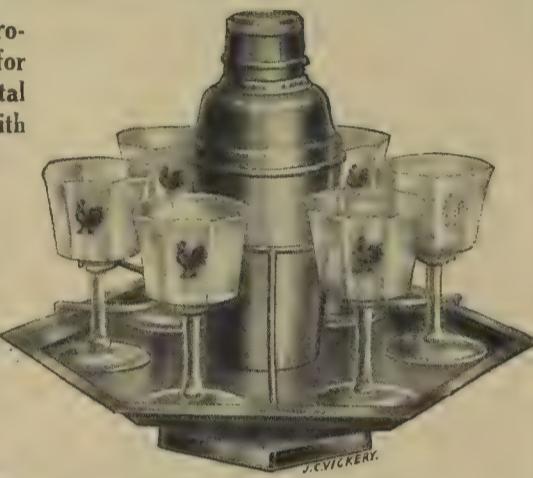
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Take it up tenderly
lift it with care
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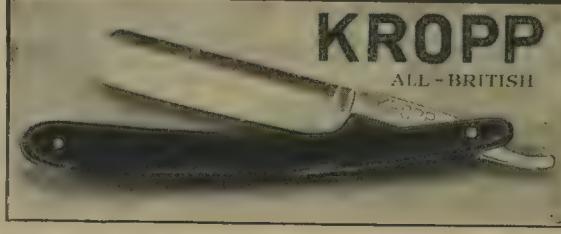
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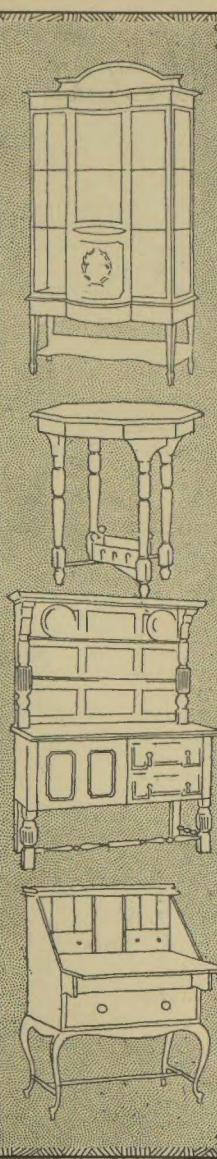
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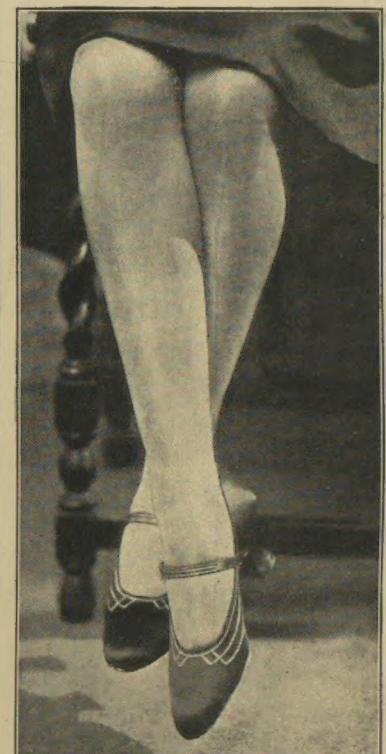
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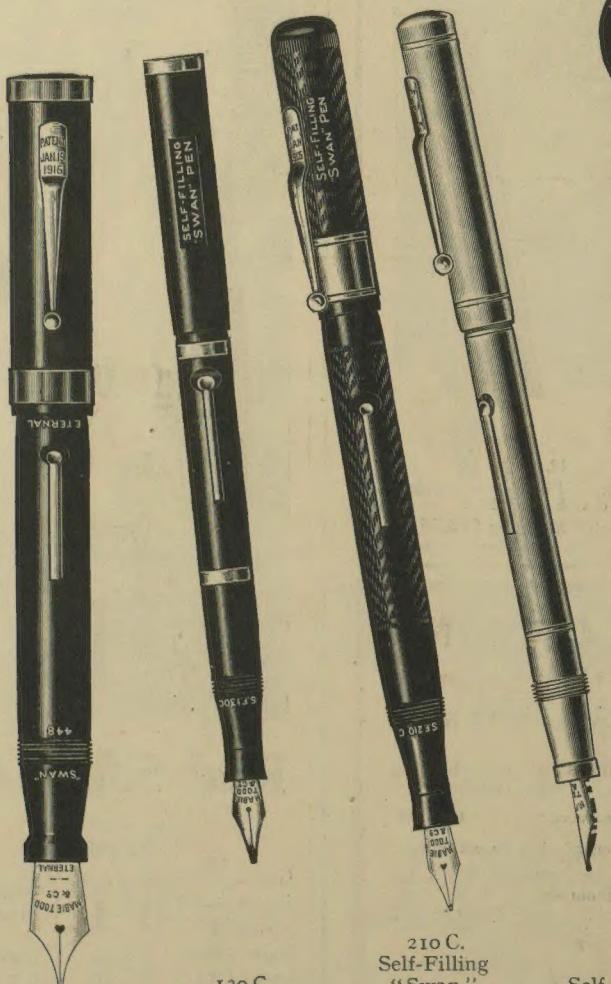
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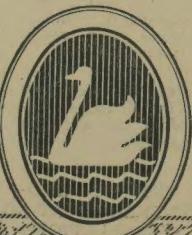
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